SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 545. FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 10TH, 1899. [ONE PENNY.

A SWIMMER

AND

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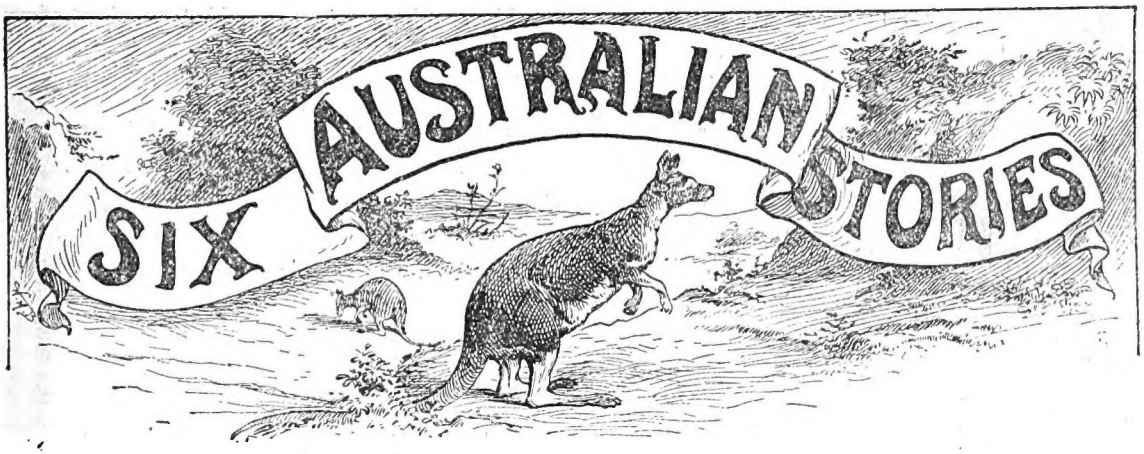

By E. MILLS.

IV.—MAZEPPA.

It was soon after the first remembered sorrow of our lives—my father's death—that Mrs. Wycherley sent an urgent invitation to Willwanda. Jack, myself, and little Susie were to spend a month at Reedy Creek, which was then the largest and finest station in the district. The Wycherleys did most things generously, some said extravagantly. The great rambling house was a paradise to young people, and it was with lightened hearts that we set out.

Jack led a packhorse, I had Susie perched in front of me, and we reached the station early in the afternoon. As we turned the corner of the long lagoon, we heard the bell peal out, and could see a cloud of dust rising in front of the culvert.

"Something's up," said Jack. "Let's canter on. They wouldn't ring the bell at that time for nothing."

But even as he spoke out of the dust came a crowd of Wycherleys on horseback. The Wycherleys were a very large family, and all who could ride were there, from big, black-haired, blue-eyed Lance to the fat, seven-year-old twins "Bob and Betty." They were upon us in a minute, all shouting and talking at once. I managed to gather that "Mazeppa had cleared out, and we were to put the pack-horse in the paddock and go out to see the fun." We had been at Reedy Creek on former occasions when Mazeppa had run away, so we were quite willing to assist in capturing her. I told Susie to hold on tight, and was soon cantering in the rear of the procession.

Mazeppa sixteen years ago had been a fat, yellow, half-caste baby. The blacks were very bad in those day, and had speared some of Lance Wycherley's cattle. In retaliation he had collected several "guns," and dispersed the camp. Dispersing meant a good deal. Very probably it resulted in sending several of Mazeppa's relatives to their happy hunting grounds. At any rate, she was found next day in a deserted gunyah, and no one ever returned to claim her.

Old Lance felt himself responsible for the orphan's welfare, and, taking her home, gave her to the childless wife of the overseer to keep. As time went on Mrs. M'Shea became very fond of the elfin baby. So, indeed, were the children at the big house. As she grew older she shared their governesses and tutors, and spent most of her time with them, and was especially the chum and companion of fair-haired Gracie Wycherley, for their ages were, as nearly as could be known, the same.

The overseer's wife read Byron, and, being particularly struck with the name Mazeppa, had so christened the child. It seemed to suit her very well. She was a queer-tempered little thing, and given to strange and sullen fits of restlessness, which always terminated in an attempt to run away. She was generally found and brought back very soon. Repentant and silent, she would then settle down and become her merry self for several months, until the wandering fit was on again. As her companions usually got a holiday from the much enduring teacher to look for her, they hailed the news of her disappearance with delight. Of late years, Mazeppa's restless fits had come seldom, so that we had unexpectedly dropped into a hunt.

Mazeppa was apparently happy. Indeed, she was the spoilt plaything of them all, and was never made to feel belonging to a despised race.

Therefore, to most people her sudden wandering fits were unaccountable. Some wild message of a freer life, whose import we could not gather, seemed to be heard by her in the wattle scented breezes. It was generally when the wattles first burst into bloom that Mazeppa went roving.

We had not far to go; the girl had only been missed a little while, and by sunset we had tracked her to a pine ridge, and seen glimmers of her white dress in the topmost branches of a pine tree.

Young Lance did not like to be reminded a few years later of the way he, with the help of Jack, attacked the giant trunk with axes, when threats and entreaties had proved vain.

Their last device succeeded, and Mazeppa came down, weeping and miserable, to be soothed and petted by Gracie, while the others raced and shouted along the forest aisles, as full of health and spirits as a stock-yard of young horses.

Did I say that in a few years Lance hated to be

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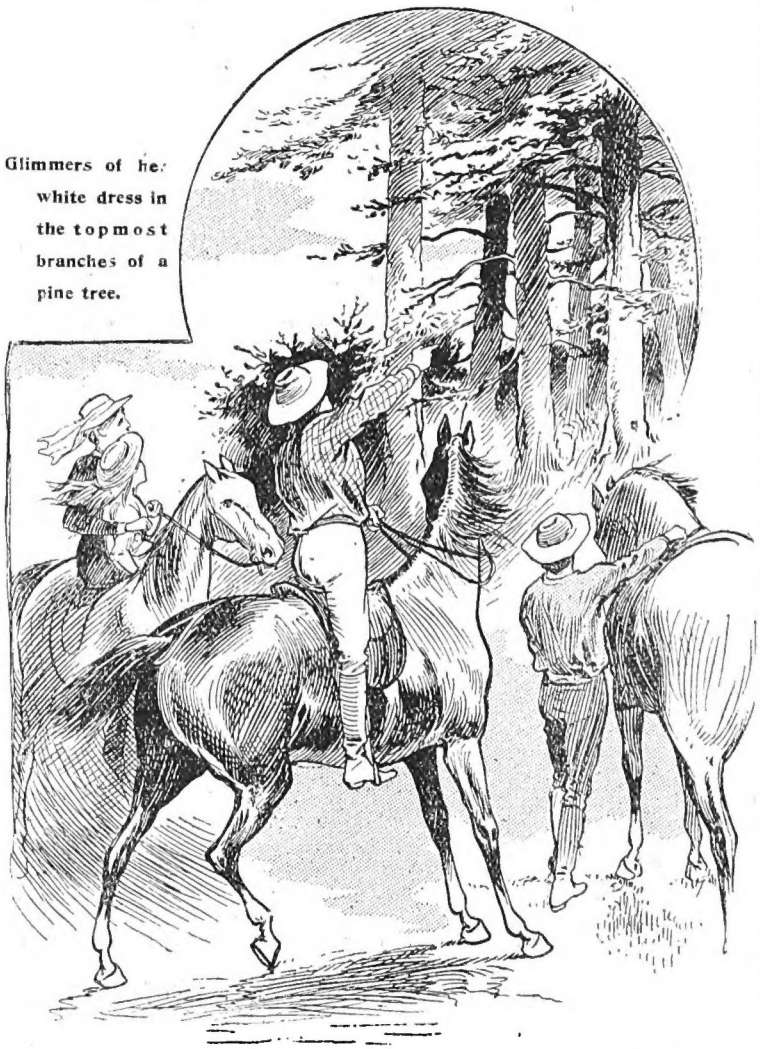
reminded of his boyish roughness? A few months, I should have said.

As the year drew to a close, Lance had put aside a good deal of his boyishness, although he was only nineteen. Gracie had her hair up, and Mazeppa, whose figure showed womanly curves that Gracie's lacked, had gone into long dresses.

I wonder if motherly Mrs. Wycherley and her bluff-kindly husband realised how very pretty the half-caste girl had grown. They always looked on Mazeppa as a plaything and spoiled pet of the household, and no one but a stranger would notice the look in Lance Wycherley's eyes. Perhaps Lance himself least of all realised that his eyes *did* change when they rested on Mazeppa. My memory of her seems always connected with the sunny corner of the verandah, where she used to sit and play with the twins; of the big sofa, with its silken cushions, in the cool flower-scented drawing-room, and a white-clad figure curled up luxuriously amongst them; of a rich, sweet voice singing weird songs; or of little useless brown hands bringing soft music, with a charm all its own, from the old school-room piano. Music was the only thing the long-suffering tutors at Reedy Creek could drill into Mazeppa's head. For other lessons and the constraint of school hours she cared not a jot, and forgot anything as soon as it was told her. She helped Mrs. M'Shea a little in the mornings before she came over to the big house—only a very little; otherwise, she was contented with the part she played in the big Wycherley household.



Glimmers of her white dress in the topmost branches of a pine tree.

Other changes had taken place. Gracie had an admirer, and it was for this reason that she lengthened her frocks and put up her hair. Although sixteen, she was still childish in figure and face, in spite of her many inches and slim waist. I looked at her admirer with awe and reverence the first time I saw him. He was a new chum, and had taken up a selection on Reedy Creek. He was not of the hard-working, money-less kind, for he spent most of his time playing tennis at the station, and seemed to have enough of this world's goods to buy Gracie boxes of chocolates such as bush girls seldom see, and all the latest books and papers. He was a good-looking, grey-eyed man, with a long, reddish-brown moustache, and he dressed well, and talked Society talk, which impressed us immensely. It was wonderful to hear him carelessly mention "Brindisi," and give his opinion of the different "liners," or begin a story with "When I was at Monaco." He made Jack and Lance look overgrown and countryfied, and he always spoke of them as if they were babes in arms—compared to himself in experience of the world. He was not by any means a good man; but that we did not know then, and it was a characteristic of the carelessness of the elder Wycherleys that he was allowed to mix so freely with the growing sons and daughters.

Mazeppa was away staying with a friend of Mrs. M'Shea's in the township when we came this time to Reedy Creek. I received most of Gracie's confidences. She quite thought he meant to propose, and so did I, for we were young enough then to think men meant all they said. He certainly paid her marked attention. Gracie was only undecided as to whether she would accept him at once or keep him waiting a year to "try his love." She went about with a proud and haughty manner, as befitted the future bride of Cecil Seymore, and was much reviled by the younger fry for her new pronunciation of words such as "brown" and "round," which she had hitherto used as if they had an "a" in them.

Lance did not like Seymour, and hinted darkly that he could not ride for sour apples. But Lance was not on the scene long, for his father shipped him off on a long droving trip before Mazeppa returned. Perhaps something had opened his eyes to the fact of his eldest son's infatuation.

On the afternoon of the day Mazeppa returned, Cecil,

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as usual, rode to the station. I was in the hammock on the verandah, and through the open French windows could see Mazeppa curled up on the sofa. Her wavy hair was lying in heavy folds against the cushions, her scarlet lips and soft olive skin set off by its inky blackness, and the long lashes were half veiling her wonderful dreamy eyes.

The white muslin clung round her like Indian drapery, and the grace of the picture struck even me, to whom it was a familiar thing. No wonder that the man who saw it for the first time stopped and gazed his fill at the pretty scene. Something in his bold yet guarded eyes struck me unpleasantly, and I tumbled ungracefully out of the hammock, and, bustling into the room, was in time to see Mazeppa's pretty confusion and start of surprise, and to make the two acquainted by a formal introduction. Then Gracie came in, her fair hair done up in a wonderful and tortuous style, and drawn primly off her low, white forehead. She was decidedly pretty, as a budding flower is pretty, with a promise of future glories, but beside Mazeppa's tropical face and womanly charms she looked but a gawky schoolgirl. I wondered if Mr. Seymour noticed it. At night Mazeppa played and sang to us, and Cecil sat silent in the canvas chair, dutifully whirling a silver-mounted horsetail over Gracie's fair head to keep away the mosquitoes.

In the days that followed Mazeppa seemed to change. The restless fits seemed gone for ever, and she was actually seen to attempt to help her adopted mother with the ironing. Mr. Seymour came as often as ever, and Gracie still posed as the haughty bride-to-be. One night she talked to Mazeppa and me about it as we sat on her bed and watched her plaiting her hair.

'Has he ever said he loves you?" I inquired.

'Gracie nearly dislocated her neck in an attempt to look at her back hair over her shoulder in the glass, while she calmly replied:

"Well, no, not exactly, but he just looks, you know, and says, 'How you will enjoy your first season in London,' and 'when you see Farnborough Manor (that's his place at home). Once he squeezed my hand' under the table, and said I was unkind when I dragged it away and glared at him."

"Of course," I said, "if he did that it is just as good; and will you let him kiss you, Gracie?"

"That depends; when we are properly engaged I suppose he might," answered Gracie as calmly as if she were discussing a picnic. "But I don't care about it much. I've only been kissed by father, whose beard is so prickly, and the boys, who hug like bears, and don't kiss nicely at all. On the whole, I think I won't allow kissing."

Then Mazeppa spoke. "If I loved a man," she said "he could kiss me for ever!"

Gracie smiled in a superior manner. "Child," she said, "no one could love a man until she was engaged to him; besides you don't know what love is."

"But I do," cried Mazeppa. "I love you, Gracie. Oh! I love you," and she sprang off the bed and rushed up to the startled Gracie, and threw her arms passionately round her.

"Of course you do," laughed the fair haired maiden; "but it is different, quite different. Oh, you impulsive darling, you have pulled all my hair down."

Mazeppa dropped her arms by her side, and walked to the window, her bosom rising and falling, her starry eyes full of a strange fire, while we two heartless schoolgirls laughed at her wild words, and at the idea of Mazeppa in love. Yet she knew, and we did not.

As time went on Cecil Seymore came oftener, and even Gracie began to notice how he haunted Mazeppa. At first she thought it was accidental; then she grew angry—

Make the two acquainted by a formal introduction.

not with the girl—I do not think it entered her head to be jealous of the half-caste, pretty as she was. It seemed impossible to her that any man could admire a girl who could scarcely read or write, whose hair was too short and wavy to be done fashionably, and, worst of all, who was distinctly "fat," for so we designated Mazeppa's womanly plumpness.

No, she was angry with Mr. Seymore because he neglected her, and she showed it pretty plainly one moonlit summer's night, when he elected to escort Mazeppa over to Mrs. M'Shea's for some music, instead of taking Gracie for a row on the lagoon. She flounced out of the room in a very undignified and anything but "grown-up" manner, and, seizing my arm, dragged me by it into the boathouse to talk.

"I do not believe he is in love with me after all," she declared.

I was obliged to agree with her. "No, lovers don't behave like that," I said.

Gracie was not put out. "I'll just scorn him to-morrow and for ever," she said, "and really, Francie, I'm not sorry. It's an awful bother behaving in a grown-up way. I'm just dying to take up the tuck in my dresses again. Jack beats me always at tennis now, and I know it is only because my frock trails on the ground. I won't rest until I beat him. Jack is sensible, and I like him; in fact, if I marry at all, the man must be an

Australian! I quite decided to-day when I saw how Mr. Seymore's trousers ruckled up when he canters. Mark my words, Francie, that man could not sit a pig-root," with which sentence of condemnation Miss Wycherley gathered up her skirts and challenged me to race her to the white gate.

That same night she slept the untroubled sleep of girlhood, whilst I tossed and tossed and counted sheep, and said the alphabet back and forwards, in a vain attempt to follow her example.

It was hot, and I believe I was thirsty and hungry, for I suddenly had visions of a certain tree of Royal George peaches in the lower garden. I donned a wrapper, and, stepping through the low window, I made my way to the orchard. The moonlight was almost as bright as day, and I soon filled the pockets of my gown with my treasure trove. I was returning through the shrubbery, where sh dows lay thick, when I heard voices. I put the branches of an oleander gently aside, and was upon Mazeppa and Mr. Seymore before I knew what had happened. I drew back, for I had come on a love-scene—a real one—for Seymore held the girl tightly in his arms, and was passionately kissing her red lips.

"Disgusting," I murmured. "I've a good mind to jump out and frighten them." Then I changed my mind, for some latent womanliness softened my youthful hard-heartedness.

"She would hate me to see her," I thought, and I waited to see if they would move on and let me escape.

"You will be my own, my darling, for ever," he whispered. "I will take you away from this dull station. I will give you jewels and everything a woman could wish for. My life will be devoted to you—my beautiful, tropical flower."

His voice was shaking with emotion, and he looked like a lover in a picture.

Mazeppa's voice was low, and strangely altered as she replied: "Love you? Ah, you know it. You have always known it, but it is Gracie you must marry—she loves you; she will be engaged to you!"

Cecil swore a little under his breath, and then laughed. "What a child you are," he said. "As for that skinny, prim, yellow-haired little prude—could I kiss her as I kiss you, sweetheart?"

I wondered if I ought to cover up my ears, and not listen to any more rubbish, but I was curious to hear what Mazeppa had to say.

"If I was not here you would love her," she said with conviction.

"Nonsense," he replied. "Forget her and talk of yourself. Promise me that you will come away with me when I go to Sydney at the end of this month. Three weeks more, Mazeppa—only three weeks—and then you must be mine—altogether. Do not say anything about it until I give you leave. Will you promise, beloved?"

Mazeppa was dumb even to this passionate pleading, and did not answer.

"Then you do not love me?" he said mockingly.

At this Mazeppa gave a low, strange cry and flung her arms round his neck, bending the fair, closely-cropped head down until it rested on her shoulder.

"Love you?" she said. "Ah, you know, you know!"

This was too much for my feelings! I stole back to the orchard, and going all the way by the kitchen-garden, I reached our bedroom, meaning to wake Gracie and unmask the traitors. And Mrs. M'Shea will scold when she finds Mazeppa has stayed up so late, I thought. Gracie was sleeping so quietly, I decided to let my news wait until morning. Then I fell asleep, to be awakened by what seemed to my drowsy senses to be a white ghost that crept softly to Gracie's bed and kissed her, and cried softly over her, or was it only in a dream that I heard Mazeppa saying: "Good-bye, good-bye," with a sound of tears?

It was not until the evening of the following day that Mrs. M'Shea became uneasy, and walked over to the big house to ask Mazeppa to come and help her with the ironing. The girl as often as not slept in one of the spare beds at the big house, instead of going home.

Seymore held the girl tightly in his arms, and was passionately kissing her red lips.

Of course, we could only tell her that Mazeppa had left us early the night before. As for Mr. Seymore, he had taken his departure immediately after breakfast; not at all disturbed, apparently, by the chilling scorn of Miss Grace Wycherley and Miss Francie Farrar. There was no doubt in everyone's minds that Mazeppa had gone—"wandering," and had this time an uncommonly good start. But my mind misgave me, and I decided to tell Mr. Wycherley all I knew, with the result that he rushed off to Mr. Seymore's selection, and thus lost two good hours.

Mr. Seymore owned up shamefacedly to his moonlight love-making, but swore he had left her safely at the house, and he urged Mr. Wycherley to

start out a search party at once. Mr. Wycherley called him a scoundrel, but took his advice, and the two men galloped back to the stat on to set matters going. It was plain to all of us what the strange, complex-natured girl had done. The clue lay in her words: "You would love Gracie if I were not here." Gracie cried bitterly, and so did I, for we both felt that this was no ordinary flitting.

"They will never find her," I said. And they never did.

A fearful storm came up, and the floods of rain obliterated her tracks, which trended towards the scrubs that swept up the ranges. In those days the blacks about Reedy Creek were still in large numbers. Sometimes we thought Mazeppa had joined them, her mother's people, and was living with them amongst the granite hills, but Mazeppa, with her dainty ways, her love of luxury, it could not be. Sometimes we thought she had drowned herself, and been swept down in the flooded gullies after the fearful storm. Or, again, that she had been hiding quite near, and had, with Seymore's help, got to Sydney. But that could scarcely be, for Cecil Seymore helped long and earnestly in the search. As time went on, his ardour cooled, and he looked distinctly relieved when it was at last declared hopeless. Reedy Creek Station became a house of mourning. Poor Mazeppa, with her beautiful face, and strange, unformed childish mind, and untamed nature, there was little about her to hold a man like Seymore.

Once gone she was forgotten. Old Wycherley could not forgive or forget, and Cecil Seymore found it convenient to sell his selection, and take his departure from the district, and finally from the colonies.

Even to Lance, as the years went on, bringing other loves and other interests with them, the girl became but as a tender, regretful memory, and when the name of Wycherley (as the result of the big drought) was no more heard in connection with Reedy Creek, sweet Gracie, far away from the scene of the poor, mistaken child's flight, allowed Time, the healer, to console her also. She will never forget Mazeppa, but remembers her only as we remember the dead.

There are a wrinkled, white-haired woman and an old man, whose working days are over, who still inherit the overseer's cottage on Reedy Creek, though owners and managers rise, decline, and fall, and in their hearts the half-caste's memory is still green, for they nightly place a flaring fat lamp on the gate-post to show Mazeppa "home" again.

North Knowing.—When travelling on the railway always take a seat just in front of a fat old gentleman. In case of a collision, he breaks the hurt wonderfully.

The Queen of Italy employs a lady physician. Whenever the Queen feels a little out of sorts she sends for her physician, and the two talk about the latest fashions. This is a medicine that will cure almost any woman.

The value of literature entirely depends. If a book has a calf-skin cover it is valuable as a razor-strop. If it is thick it comes in first-rate to put under the corner of a chest of drawers which has lost a leg. If it has a clasp on that will keep it closed, it cannot be eclipsed as a missile to hurl at a dog. If it has a large cover like a geography, it is as good as a piece of tin to nail over a broken pane of glass. If it belongs to somebody else it is a convenient article to hold up a window.

Antiquarian: "The custom of throwing the slipper after a bride comes down from very ancient times. Long before the Christian era, a defeated chief would take off his shoes and hand them to the victor, to show that the loser of the shoes yielded up all authority over his subjects. So, when the family of a bride throw slippers after her they mean that they renounce all authority over her. Do you understand?"

Small Auditor: "Yessir. They throw away the slippers they used to spank her with."

How rapidly a man loses all interest in politics and national finance when he shuts the door on his own thumb.

Mr. Grump: "I can't see, my dear, what good that border of fur does you round the hem of your skirt."

Mrs. Grump: "Why, it shows that I can afford it."

At a charity fair in Berlin the Empress of Germany has been selling sausages at £3 apiece and sponge-cake at 10s. a slice. Any man who will mix sponge-cake and sausage ought not to haggle about the price.

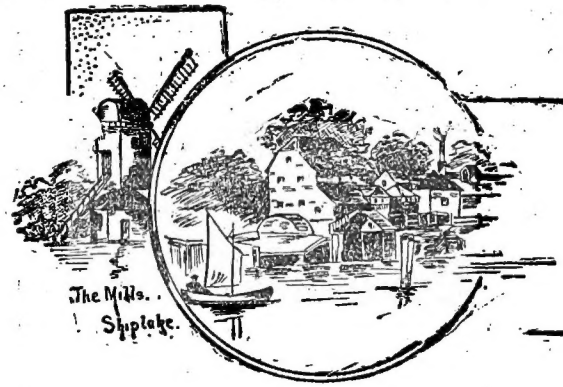
The tomato may be grilled, as well as a Christian saint, and the fact seems to lead to some confusion. Example:

Teacher (at a night school in the East-end of London): "Can any of you boys tell me what a martyr is?"

Street Arab (after a long pause): "Please, sir, it's a red shiny thing as yer buys on a Saturday night."

An Idea that may be Turned to Account by English Artists.—A very great French artist who has never "exhibited" at the Paris *Salon*, and who never will, tells an excellent story. It appears that one of his young disciples, fond of being puffed, sent his pictures by a porter new to him, but who happened to be a model of the good old times.

"Shall I take them sandwich-fashion, monsieur?" asked the man. "They might be refused, and my doing so would, at any rate, give the public a chance!"



KISMET.

ALL day long the heat had been overpowering. In spite of sun helmets of the latest pattern, and karkee jackets warranted to keep out the heat, many cases of sunstroke had been reported, and even the camels seemed to be thankful the cool of evening was upon us, as they lay in long lines, lazily munching their allowance of burzeem.

Most of us were extended full length on the sand, only the more energetic were sitting on cases of tinned meat or regimental stores. We were all enjoying the fragrant weed, and as we watched the smoke ascend towards the otherwise cloudless sky, we were chatting amongst ourselves or telling yarns for the benefit of the general circle. Only one of our number seemed dull and out of sorts, and we rallied him on his want of spirits.

"You are funking to-morrow, Snapper," said one young fellow, raising himself on his elbow, "otherwise you would be more expansive. This scene," he continued, with an airy wave of his pipe to a group of palm trees, "is enough to inspire the most unromantic person."

The individual addressed as Snapper was a good-looking, well set-up man, who had earned this nickname through his love of photography, and the fact that he carried a snap-shot camera with him wherever he went.

All through the campaign Snapper and his camera had been ubiquitous.

He had calmly taken photos in the very thick of the fight, for he was not a soldier like the others in that group, but a war correspondent, and one who was known to be wherever there was most danger, regardless apparently of life and limb. Hence the youngster's sally of his funking next day's battle caused a gurgle of laughter from his comrades.

"I tell you what it is," said Major Sands, as he relit his pipe, "we shall have our work cut out for us to-morrow; these dervish Johnnies fight like the devil."

"They all so firmly believe in Kismet," said another. 'They think if Allah wills them to be killed they will be killed, and if he wishes them to live nothing can harm them."

"Not a bad idea, you know," observed Captain Hinton. 'I believe I rather think that myself, only in a different way."

"Certainly, when one hears of the hairbreadth escapes some men have, it really looks as if there was something in it," put in young Saunders, the man who had rallied Snapper on his silence.

"I knew a fellow who had gone all through the Indian Mutiny unscathed, and as he was going on board ship to come home slipped over a coil of rope, fell into the hold, and was killed in a most prosaic way," remarked Major Sands. "No honour or glory about that. He had always been unlucky, so everyone said, 'Just like his luck.' But, of course, it was Fate."

"We seem to have got on a nice cheerful subject," said Snapper gloomily. "Can't someone give us a song, or else talk about something more lively?"

"We are not musical, dear boy," replied Saunders. "In fact, I may say, without undue prejudice, that as a regiment we could not sing a song amongst us."

"Here's a funny thing," said Maclaren, who had been reading a newspaper some weeks old. "A fellow writes that he was staying at a haunted house, and took his camera with him."

"It might have been you, Snapper," interrupted the irrepressible subaltern.

"Well," continued Maclaren, "he took photos of several of the rooms, and when the plates were developed people were distinctly visible sitting or standing in these same rooms, though the photographer swears that when he did the pictures the said rooms were absolutely empty."

"Must have dined I should think, and stood in front of the camera himself, forgetting he had the cap off," suggested Major Sands, prosaicly.

"I think it extremely likely that what he states really did happen," remarked the correspondent.

"Oh, come, Snapper, draw it mild, we have all heard you discourse on the marvels of the camera, but you are not going to make us believe that it can take things which are not there. Probably the whole thing is invented by the paper to bring about a correspondence in its columns. They most likely think they will get the Psychical Society to take up the question. They are always delighted to find a new ghost or spirit knocking about."

"Well, you fellows can believe it or not, as you please, but I do, for I know how wonderful is the sensitiveness of the camera lens. I myself have had things happen to me in that way only lately which makes me quite creepy when I think of them."

Snapper paused to refill his pipe, and then continued, "If you care to hear it I will tell you why I have felt so depressed and dull these last few days. It is all the result of a photograph I did a short time ago."

Most of his listeners raised themselves to a sitting posture and all prepared to listen to the yarn, for Snapper was a raconteur of the first water, was generally interesting, and seldom dull.

"Fire away!" commanded the Major. "'Tention all. Snapper's to have the floor, or rather the sand of the desert."

"About a week ago," commenced Snapper, "I was strolling vaguely about, camera in hand, when I came upon a bit that struck my fancy, simply from a pictorial point of view—a group of date palms, and close by some camels lying down resting. The cloudless blue sky, the palms, camels, and the desert struck me as being so purely Oriental a scene that I took it, a though I had determined as I was running short of films not to expose any on what I might call useless subjects. The drivers of the camels were nowhere to be see, and I should like you to specially mark this point."

"Marked it is," quoth Saunders, making a cross on the sand with his finger.

"Now, when I came to develop the plate, an extraordinary thing happened, for there were distinctly visible two figures. They came out quite clear and strong, not in the faint way a doubly exposed plate usually develops. I was so struck with this that I printed the picture, and found to my horror that one was a recumbent man, and that man was myself, but my throat was cut apparently from ear to ear. Beside me stood, or rather appeared, almost to be executing a sort of war dance, a huge dervish brandishing a long knife. I don't mind telling you fellows I felt rather queer. Taking one picture on the top of another could not possibly account for this. Puzzle over the matter as I would, I could arrive at no conclusion on the subject.

"Since my arrival in Egypt I have heard so much about Kismet and fate, that I really begin to wonder could it possibly be a warning of some sort. For the first time in my life I am in a funk, a real blue funk, about to-morrow's fight, for I have the oddest presentiment that I shan't see Old England again, and—— Well, you fellows know, I am engaged to the dearest little girl in the world."

His voice gave a suspicious tremble, and if we had not known him to be the pluckiest, as well as the most light-hearted of men, we would have suspected a rather queer moisture about his eyes.

"My dear chap, you are hipped," said Captain Hunter. "Buck up man, this climate *is* a bit trying to the liver."

"Makes me beastly depressed at times," remarked Maclaren, "I have felt it myself often. It is the sun and the sand, and everything," he added vaguely.

Hamilton alias Snapper did not answer for a moment; he was turning over the leaves of a large pocket-book.

"Here it is," he announced presently, and handed a photograph to the man next him.

Strong, brave man as he was, he visibly paled under his tan as he looked at the picture.

"How horrible," he muttered quite involuntarily. "It is exactly like you."

He passed it on to the Major, and so round on the group. With the exception of a few half-repressed murmurs, it was received in silence.

"It is the most extraordinary thing I ever saw," said Major Sands at last. "I wish you would let me keep it if you don't want it."

"I can't say I do," replied Hamilton. "The thing has got on my nerves, and I am glad to be rid of it"

"Probably some quite prosaic thing would explain it; if we only knew perhaps it is a picture of a battle, only two figures coming out," suggested Saunders, "and the likeness to yourself accidental."

"No, I don't think so," quietly responded Hamilton; "I am almost positive I took the film from a fresh batch."

"Well, we had better turn in if we are going to get any sleep," observed Captain Hunter; and most of them took his advice and went off to their tents. Only Major Sands remained behind with Hamilton. The latter suddenly spoke:

"Look here, Sands," he said, taking two letters from his pocket, "you and I have been rather pals during the campaign, in fact, I look upon you as my best friend, and I don't know anybody else I would like to trust with these. Of course, these fellows thought I was yarning, but I have such a foreboding that it will be all up with me to-morrow, that I want you to take these two letters, and send them the first opportunity you have if I don't turn up after the battle. One is to my next brother. You know I have a little property in Scotland, and he will succeed, of course, but I want him to look after one or two people I am interested in, and also I was foolish enough to make no provision for my mother. He is a good lad, and I know he will follow my advice and count my requests as law. The other, the other," there was a perceptible shake in his voice, "the other is to Elsie. When you go home, old man, you might see her and tell her my last thought was for her. Tell her, also, that if at any time she finds she could care for another, and that other is worthy of her, she is not to let thoughts of what might have been stand between her and happiness. Will you do this for me, old fellow, in the event of anything happening?"

Sands wrung his hand.

"My dear chap, I sincerely hope that it will be unnecessary, but if such an unlucky thing as you fear should take place, you may depend on me. I will look after her for you."

"Tell her you were my greatest friend, and that she can trust you always," said Hamilton, as they were parting for the night.

* * * * *

The next day Khartoum fell. Kitchener and his victorious army had routed the dervish horde. Wonderfully few were our losses, but, alas! there were still enough to cause many aching hearts at home. Among the slain lay Hamilton, his camera beside him. A shot had reached his heart, which was evidently the cause of death, but his throat had been cut—as in the photograph he had shown us—from ear to ear, and a dervish, wounded himself, was dancing a weird fantastic dance by his body, brandishing a knife dripping with blood, when we found him.

Very reverently Snapper's friends carried him into camp, and, with a sad heart, Major Sands dispatched the two missives to England. He inclosed with them each a letter from himself. Alas! he could not assuage the grief which it would carry into two homes; but, at least, he could soften it. Very sympathetically, in a few well-chosen words, he told Hamilton's beloved how his last thoughts had been of her, and how his last words had commended her to his care.

Later on, when the war was practically over, he was invalided home.

He did not find his bequest an irksome one at all, and, though Elsie still mourns Hamilton sincerely and deeply, I think, could he see what is going on below, that he would be the first to rejoice that Major Sands thinks he cannot take care of his legacy better than by marrying her, and as he tells Elsie of Hamilton's last words, she trusts him by giving him herself for always.

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Maud Craigie Halkett.

From Prairie and Backwoods.

XI.—Trouble in the Cañon.

ONE time this yere Cherokee Bill and Dan Boggs is a-coming in from Tucson on the stage. Besides Cherokee an' Boggs, along comes a female a close herdin' of two young ones—which them infants might have been stingin' lizards, an' every one a heap heavier—an' sorter in charge of the whole outfit is a long, lean man in a black coat. Well, they hops in, an' Boggs and Cherokee gives 'em the two back seats on account of the female an' the yearlin's.

"My name is Jones," says the man in the black coat, when he gets settled back an' the stage is going, "an' I'm an exortin' evangelise an' I plucks brands from the burnin'."

"I'm powerful glad to know it," says Boggs. "Them games of chance which enjoys public notice in this yere clime are some various, an' I did think I shorely tests 'em all; but if the device you names was ever open in Wolfville I overlooks the same complete."

"Pore sinkin' soul," says the black-coat man, "he's a-floundering in the mire of sin. Don't you know, my perishin' friend, you are bein' swept downward in the river of your own sinful life till your soul will be drowned in the abyss?"

"Well, no," says Boggs, "I didn't. I allows I was makin' a mighty dry ford of it."

"Lost, lost!" says the black-coat man, a-leanin' back plenty hopeless. "It is a stiff-necked generation an' sorely perversed a lot."

Well, the stage jolts along two or three miles an' nuthin' being said. The black-coat man he groans occasionally, which worries Boggs, an' the two infants, gettin' restless, comes tumblin' over onto Cherokee an' go searchin' of his pockets for mementos. This yere is about as pleasant and refreshin' to Cherokee as bein' burned at the stake, but the mother she leans back an' smiles, an' of course he's plumb helpless. Finally the black-coat man p'ints in for another talk.

"What is your name, my poor worm?" says the black-coat man, addressin' of Boggs, "an' whatever avocation has you an' your lost companion?"

"Why," says Boggs, "this yere's Hall—Cherokee Hall. He turns faro in the Red Light; an'," continues Boggs, a-lowerin' of his voice, "he's as squar' a man as ever counted a deck. Actooally, pard, you might not think it, but all that man knows about a cold deck or dealin' second, or any such sinful schemes, is just mere tradition."

"Brother," says the female, bristlin' up an' tacklin' the black-coat man, "don't talk to them any more. Them's gamblers, an' mighty awful men," an' with that she snatches away the yearlin's like they was contaminated.

This was some relief to Cherokee, but the young ones howls like coyotes an' wants to come back an' finish robbing their victim, but the mother, she spanks 'em, an' when Boggs was goin' to give 'em some cartridges outen his belt to amoose 'em, she sasses him scandalous, and allows she ain't needin' no attention from him. Then she leans back an' snorts at Cherokee an' Boggs mighty contemptuous. The young ones keeps on yellin' in a unmelodious way, and while Cherokee is ca'm an' don't seem like he minds it much, Boggs gets nervous, and finally lugs out his bottle, aimin' to drink a lot an' compose his feelin's, which they was some harrowed by this time.

"Well, I never," says the woman. "I shorely sees sots before now, but at least they has the decency not to drink before a lady."

This stampedes Boggs complete, an' so he throws the bottle outen the stage an' don't get no drink.

After awhile the stage strikes into the upper end of a dark, rocky cañon. This yere cañon was about two miles long, an' was lately reckoned some bad. Nuthin' had every happened on the line, but hese yere was the days when Victoria an' his Apaches was cavortin' round plenty loose, an' as Gen. Wilcox had done run 'em outen the Floridas over in New Mexico about a month before, it was mighty possible they was a-layin' somewar in the hills along the trail to Tucson. If they ever gets a notion to stand up the stage, they was shore due to do it in this yere cañon, wherefore Cherokee an' Boggs an' old Monte, who's drivin', regards it plenty suspicious.

"Send 'em through on the jump, Monte," says Cherokee, sticking out his head.

So the six hosses lines out at ten-mile gait which

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rattles things around a whole lot, an' makes the black-coat man sigh, while the young ones sets up some appalling shrieks. The female gets speshul mad at this, thinkin' as how they're playin' it low down on her fambly, but she takes it out in cuffin' the yearlin's now an' then, just to keep 'em yellin', an' don't say nuthin'.

Well, the stage gets about half way through the cañon when all at once up on both sides in the rocks about twenty Winchesters begins to hop an' jump mighty permiscus, the same goin' hand in hand with whoops of onusual merit. With the firs' shot old Monte begins pourin' the whip into the team, and them hosses goes into their collars like six lions. It's plenty lucky aborigines ain't no shots. They never seem to get the phelosophy of a hind sight none, an' generally you can't reach their bullets with ten-foot pole. The only thing got this time is Boggs. About the beginnin' a little cloud of dust flys outen the shoulder of his coat, an' his face turns pale an' Cherokee knows he's creased.

"Did they get you har, old man?" says Cherokee, some anxious.

"No," says Boggs tryin' to brace himself. "I'll be around in a second. I wishes I had that whisky once I hurls overboard a minute back so graceful."

Well, the Injuns was mighty consistent, an' comes tumblin' down onto the trail an' gives chase, a shootin' an' a yellin', a heap zealous. As they was on foot an' as the 'bus was makin' good time they could jest manage to hold their own in the race, about forty yards to the r'ar. Finally Cherokee, after thinkin' a second, says straight out to Boggs:

"This yere is the ways I figgers it. If we keeps on this way these Injuns 'll shore run in on us, a half mile further on a' the ford. hey're due to down a hoss or Monte—may be both—in which event the stage shorely stops, an' it's a fight. This yere bein' troo, an' as I'm elected for a fight anyhow, I'm goin' to hop outen the stage right yere and pull on the dance myse'f. This'll stop the chase, an' to tell the fact, it's about the only chance in the box this yere poor female an' her offsprings has to live a little bit, an' I'm goin' to play it for 'em, win or lose."

"Them's my notions," says Boggs, a tryin' to pull himse'f together; "shall we take this yere he shorthorn along?" an' he p'ints where them four tenderfcet is mixed up together in the back of the stage.

"He wouldn't be no earthly use," said Cherokee, "an' you're too hard hit, Dan, yourse'f. So jest take my regards to Enright and the boys, an' smooth this all you know for Nell, an' I makes the trip alone."

"Not much," says Boggs; "my stack goes into the centre, too."

But it didn't, though, 'cause Boggs had bled a heap more'n he thought, an' the first move he makes he tips over in a faint. So Cherokee picks up his Winchester, an' openin' the door of the stage jumps clean free, an' they leave him th'ar on the trail.

Well, the stage comes into Wolfville, ten miles further down, on the lope. Boggs is still in a faint and about bled to death, while them exhortin' people is shorely outen their minds. Well, in no time a dozen of us lined out for Cherokee. Did we find him? Well, I should say we shore found him. They'd got one bullet through his laig an' there he was, with his back agin a rock wall an' his eyes a-glitterin', a-holdin' the canon. O' he was a mountain lion, every time. There never was no Injun gets by him. Of course they all runs when they hears us a-comin', so we don't get no fight.

"I hope you hails one, Cherokee," says Enright, "playin' even on this yere laig they shoots."

"I win once, I think," says Hall, "over behind that big rock to the left."

Sure enuf he's got one Injun, too dead to skin, an' coming along a little further, Booth finds a second.

"Yere's another," said Booth, "which makes even on Boggs."

"That's right," says Cherokee, "I remember now; there was two. The cards come some fast one time, an' I over'looked a bet."

Well, we gets Cherokee in all right, an' next day around comes the female tenderfoot to see him.

"I wants to thank my preserver," she says.

"You ain't under no obligations whatever, marm," says Cherokee, raisin' up a little in the bed, while Farc Nell puts another goose ha'r pillow under him; "I simply prefers to do my fightin' in the cañon to doin' it at the ford, that's all. It was jest a matter of straight business—just a preference I has. Another thing, marm, I know you'll excuse it, seein' I'm a single man an' onused to childish ways, but I was mighty glad for an excuse to get away from them blessed children of your'n."

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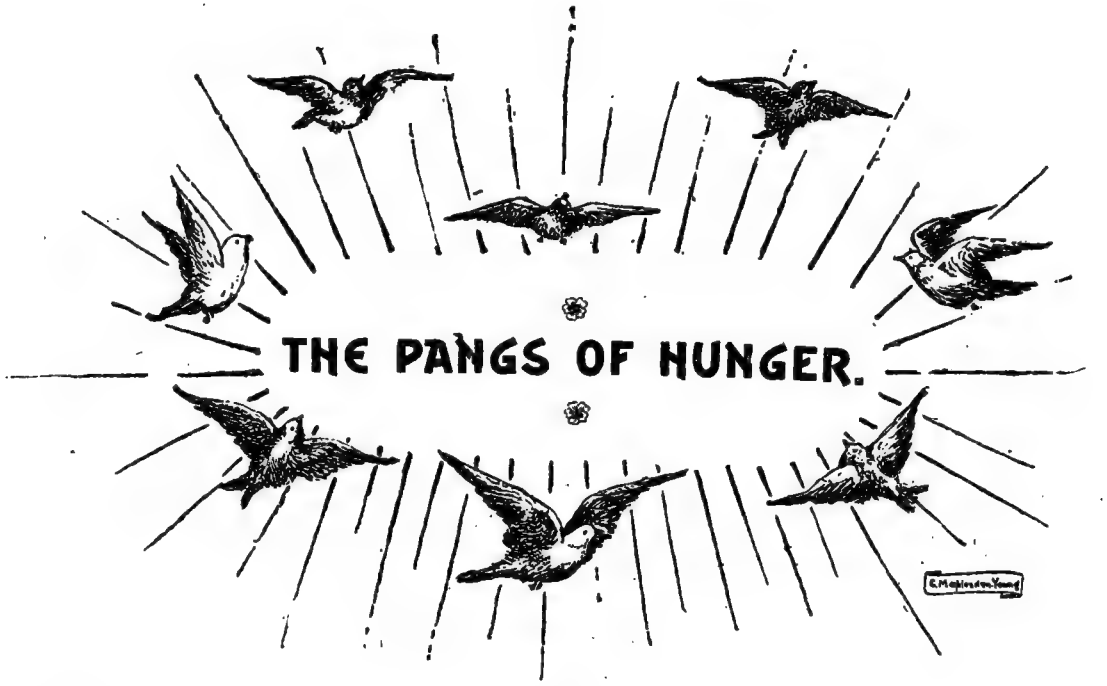

How well I remember that winter morning—clear bright, and bitterly cold as a daydawn at the Northern Pole. The children were cross and shivering in their nursery, for, of course, by one of those fatalities which seem to crowd upon the course of housekeeping, the fire had been allowed to go nearly out.

Bridget was scolding over cracked water pipes in the kitchen, and John discovered three buttons off his shirt, while I was trying in vain to brush the tangles out of little Lilla's hair.

Everything seemed to go wrong and I was almost ready to cry, when at last breakfa t was announced, and the fragrance of coffee and bacon began to act like a balm upon my perturbed spirit.

Lilla was dancing on the rug before the fire, the baby, tied in his high chair in front of a mug of milk, laughed and crowed, and John was just reading out from the newspaper one of those grotesque paragraphs which make one laugh whether one will or not, when Bridget peeped round the corner of the door.

"Please, ma'am," said she, "would yez give me a bit o' mate and a bowl o' coffee for a poor woman at the door?"

"No," said I, my face growing frigid in a second. "There is no sort of charity so foolishly bestowed as things given at the door."

John glanced mildly at me.

"Food and drink, my dear," said he, "can scarcely be misappropriated."

"But Mrs. Fuller told me that she gave a breakfast to a beggar man one morning last week at the door, and the house was besieged all day by a regular succession of tramps. They've a sort of telegraphic communication among themselves. And I subscribe to the St. Villanova Alms District, and all the church charities, and I do not intend to commence the winter by harbouring all the wretched creatures who come to the basement door. Tell the woman, Bridget, to go about her business."

"But she says she's hungry, mem."

"Tell her, I say, to go about her business," I reiterated sternly.

Bridget withdrew, muttering something under her breath. Little Lilla looked hard at me; John went on with his newspaper, wearing rather a grieved and troubled expression of countenance, and I poured out the coffee, with a Spartan sense of having done my duty. Nothing more was said on the subject, and I was dressing to go out at about eleven o'clock, when Lilla looked up from her toys.

"Mamma," said she; "it must be awful to be hungry, mustn't it?"

"Of course," said I; "but why?"

"Oh, nothing," said Lilla, balancing one block on top of another. "Only I was thinking of that poor woman Bridget sent away. Bridget said she cried."

"Nonsense!" said I irritably; "I do wish Bridget wouldn't talk so foolishly."

So I tied on my hat, folded my new shawl luxuriantly round my shoulders, and set forth to the other end of town to do a little shopping.

Or a good deal, rather. It was near the holiday times, and I had a long list of odds and ends on my memorandum, so that it was long past my regular lunch time before I had suited myself with the various items, and I began to feel famished.

"I'll go to Bunton's for my lunch," said I to myself. "A nice omelette will be exactly what I want."

So I went in and sat down at one of the tiny, damask-covered tables and gave my order. Just, however, as the waiter was entering it in his little book, I chanced to put my hand in my pocket for a handkerchief, and to my ineffable amazement and chagrin, my purse was gone.

Some of the light-fingered gentry who haunt the streets of London like shadows had relieved me of every penny I had.

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I rose hurriedly up.

"It doesn't matter," said I, waving my hand to the waiter; "you need not take my order. I—I will not lunch here to-day."

The man looked at me as if he thought I must surely be crazy; but I got out of the restaurant as fast as I could, tantalised, all the way, with the fragrant plates of soup, delicate salads and deliciously smelling tea and chocolate which the little groups of ladies were discussing all about me.

Here I was in London, with nearly two miles to walk, not a farthing in my pocket, and nearly famished.

I even found it in my heart to envy the little street Arabs who were munching hard apples under the shelter of doorways. On the whole, I think I was never so hungry in my life.

The short winter afternoon was drawing to a close as I dragged myself wearily along the pavements, looking with longing eyes into the windows of the restaurants and confectioners. I could almost have snatched from a school-girl who tripped along, the bun which she was eating.

And all of a sudden Lilla's words flashed across my memory:

"Mamma, it must be awful to be hungry, mustn't it?"

The tears came into my eyes.

"Could it be possible," I asked myself; "that this was a judgment upon me for my own harsh decision of that morning? My tribulations were a mere accident; but the poor woman who had been turned remorselessly from my door had no prospects of anything else."

The 'buses rumbled past; the cabs went by; and I, wearied in every limb, was unable to avail myself of their aid. It was dark when at last I reached home.

I threw myself, completely tired out, on a lounge in front of the fire.

"Bridget," said I, "bring me something to eat, quick I am almost starved."

The girl looked at me in amazement.

"Sure, it'll be dinner in an hour, ma'am," said she.

"An hour!" cried I impatiently; "I can't wait five minutes. Bring me a cup of tea, a slice of toast, a plate of soup—anything you have."

Bridget went out, and presently I heard her voice raised high in altercation with someone in the kitchen.

"She turned a starving woman away from the door this morning," said she. "Let her see now how she likes it herself."

"I won't go! I won't go!" said I; and I felt myself being pushed out into the twilight, when the dizzy shower of snow was beginning to fall like a host of dim white spectres fleeing through the air. But all my feeble efforts were unavailing; the deadly chill seemed to strike to my very heart. I was just falling on the threshold when Bridget's voice sounded in my ear.

"Bless and preserve us, ma'am! Is it dreamin' ye are?"

She had come in with a plate of hot tomato-soup, and found me rolling on the floor.

"Bridget," said I, as I sat up and took the bowl from her, "I did wrong about that poor creature, who came begging to the door this morning, when we were at breakfast. Hereafter, never send any one empty away, as long as there is a crust in the cupboard or a bone in the pantry."

And Bridget answered with emphasis:

"Sure, ma'am, I never will."

Amy Randoll.

A FORTUNATE MISTAKE.

I.

I was only a young man then—twenty-six—just married, and with a reputation to make. At that time the whole detective staff were engaged on the mysterious Smith case, which you no doubt remember. No?

It was this: Miss Smith was a wealthy old lady who lived on the outskirts of Windsor. She was eccentric, but generous, and lived alone with a man and his wife as servants, whom she treated very kindly.

One morning the female servant, almost dead with fright, crawled into the Windsor Police Station with the intelligence that thieves had broken into the house during the night, and that something dreadful had happened.

Miss Smith had heard them, and called out. Pentworth, the husband, had gone to Miss Smith's aid. She herself so terrified that she durst not move. She heard a groan, and lay paralysed with terror till it was light, and had then crept down by the back staircase and brought the news. What had really taken place she did not know.

Two officers went back with her. They found Pentworth on the stairs, unconscious from a great wound in his head, and Miss Smith outside her bedroom door stone dead.

Pentworth was taken to the infirmary at once, and the hue and cry was raised. Windsor telephoned to us. Two of us went. We came to the conclusion that it was a London job. It appears that Miss Smith kept a large sum of money in the house, and there was valuable plate besides, and with all this the thieves had made off. We found a jemmy, but with no distinct marks that would give us a clue. Pentworth rallied a little, but was unable to give any very decided account of the affair.

There were two men, but his description of them was so vague as to be quite useless for the purpose of identification. Poor fellow! Inflammation of the brain set in, and more than a twelvemonth elapsed before he was well again.

We worked hard to secure the murderers. We made every inquiry at Windsor and at the railway stations. We closely watched all the known thieves in town, and arrested on suspicion those whom we thought likely. But it was useless. For several weeks we exerted our-

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selves to the utmost, but it became one of those crimes that seemed fated to be a secret. Of course, the papers, who are wiser than we, were very severe with us on account of our failure. We had come to the conclusion that it was one of a series of robberies that had taken place within a radius of thirty miles from London, which had all of them completely baffled us.

II.

One evening, about a month after the murder, being off duty, my wife asked me to take a message to her brother a Strand tobacconist's assistant. My wife used to tell me I was the handsomest man in the force, and she delighted in making me look as smart as possible. As I was going out she plucked a carnation and stuck it in my buttonhole, laughingly declared I looked "just lovely." Little did we guess that that single flower would bring fortune to one and death to another.

I found my brother-in-law was not there, being out on business, but was expected back by the train due at Charing Cross at 7.15, and so I strolled up to the station to meet him. A train had just arrived, and I sauntered up and down the platform watching the arrivals.

Everybody had cleared away from the platform, when a veiled lady came hurrying by. She looked at me, and, I observed, took particular notice of the flower in my coat. She made as if to pass me, but turned round.

"Good evening, Mr. Scott," she said in an inquiring tone.

I do not know what spirit of mischief prompted me, but I answered: "Good evening."

"I should have known you by the description I've had of you, sir, as well as by your flower; but I thought you would speak first."

What did the woman mean? A detective is always suspicious: a young detective eager to achieve fame, more than suspicious. There was something about the woman I didn't like, and I determined to let her talk on, little dreaming what was to follow.

I noticed that the tone of her voice did not correspond with her dress. She was dressed richly, if not exactly elegant; but her speech showed that she was a person of little education.

"Although you have never seen me before, sir, you may put full confidence in me. I'm Bill's wife, you know, and one of you now. You know, sir, how things turned out?"

"Yes, but let me have the particulars again," I said adroitly.

"Well, Bill and Alec are in a blue funk; I never thought Bill would be so nervous as he is, they want to go over the water for a bit. Bill said I must tell you as they didn't mean to do for the old lady, not even hurt her" (I gave such a start that if the woman had been observing me she must have guessed there was something wrong), "but she screamed, and that old fool, her man, came, and it was a near squeak, I can tell you, sir. Bill 'll take his Bible oath he didn't hit hard, and that he had only stunned her, but Alec says the same about the man. They got away with the swag, and a nice sum it is"—in a whisper—"close upon £2,000.

"We've bin in a funk ever since. 'Tecs have been about everywhere, but they never suspected us. But it makes us feel nervous to see them about. Bill and Alec want to get off this week, and they want you to manage it for them."

"What do they wish me to do?" I asked.

"Well, Bill's plans are this. He thinks the best way would be to escape dressed as sailors. He says would you send or bring two suits of sailor's clothes, and give them to me here. Then Bill wants you to bring your yacht round into the Thames, and fix a night for Bill and Alec to come. They ll pretend to be slightly el vated if anyone is about, and you must be looking out for 'em and blow 'em up for not being on board before. Bill's sure they can get through all right that way."

"And supposing I refuse?" I asked rather foolishly.

She looked at me in surprise.

"Refuse, sir! Oh, I know, sir, you won't refuse. I said to Bill: 'Suppose Mr. Scott says no, how then?' Bill only laughs and says: 'It'll be all right for he hasn't forgot the Seward business!'"

I had great difficulty in again repressing my emotion. Was I about to solve the Seward business, too?

"Yes, very well; and now you'd better go. Have a hansom?"

"Yes, thank you, sir," and she was soon out of the station.

I was so excited that I scarcely knew what I was doing as I paced up and down the platforms, thinking over what I had just heard, till another incident called me to myself.

Another train had just come in that was evidently late. One of the passengers, about my size and looks, and with a flower like mine in his coat, lingered on the platform, looking keenly about. I saw it all. The train late and my carnation had revealed the Smith murderers to me. I took the flower out of my coat, and then called a smart-looking porter.

"Look here," I said, "do you know me?"

"No," he said.

"Well, I come from Scotland Yard, and I've a job on, and I want you to do a little for me. It's not much, and if you do it well, here's a sovereign for you."

"Yes, I'll do it," he said, his eyes glistening.

"There's a gentleman up on the platform yonder, with a red carnation in his coat, looking about for someone. I want you to go up to him and say: 'A young lady was here, sir, and she said would I tell a gentleman with a carnation in his buttonhole that all was right; that she had gone back, and that it would be better not to trouble you.' Can you remember?"

"Yes," he nodded.

"And, if you can, find out whether he's going back, and where to."

He started off, and I stood where I could see them without being seen.

Presently the porter came back.

"He looked mighty pleased, sir, and then said: 'How soon is there a train to Westsea?' 'In ten minutes, sir,' I said; 'further platform,' and off he's gone."

"Thank you, you've done well. Not a word about this, now," and I gave him the sovereign.

I ran to the office, booked, and then went towards the Westsea train. I found my gentleman in a first-class carriage. I got into a second. I looked out at every station to be sure that "Westsea" was not a blind. But no; he got out at Westsea, and I followed.

"Hansom!" I heard him call, and one came up. He was evidently well-known, for the driver did not need any directions. I walked up to the next in the rank.

"A cab, sir?"

"No," I said; "but here's a shilling if you'll tell me if that isn't Lord Hayleet who just took the hansom."

"Oh, no, sir, that is Mr. Scott, of Westman House."

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"What is he?"

"Oh, a hindependent gentleman, sir. Made his pile in the North, and come to live down here. He is a nice and open-handed gentleman is Mr. Scott. He's in the Town Council and a magistrate, and it strikes me he'd been in Parliament if Westsea had only a say in the matter. His yacht, the *Cleopatra*, is in the bay now."

"Thank you," I said, as I tipped him a shilling, and, well content, I went back to town.

III.

I TOLD my superior that I had a clue to the Smith murderers if they would give me a free hand.

"Certainly," said my chief, "and I hope you'll succeed. Promotion is sure if you do."

At nine o'clock that evening I met Bill's wife again. I handed her a portmanteau containing two sailor suits, and gave her explicit directions.

"You will tell them to come down to Sefton Wharf, and I'll be there myself and some of the crew, or," recollecting myself, "I will send my captain."

"Thank you, sir, very much. Bill will bring a thousand for you, and he says that they will be able to do a bit of work in Paris, for Bill can parlez-vous pretty well."

"Now, listen. Tell them to say 'Houp la!' when they get to the wharf and see a boat, and I will answer with the same. Now just go over what I have told you."

Straight away she recounted my instructions, and with a cordial "Good night" she left me.

I had a busy time the next day. I applied for and was granted as many men as I wanted. I sent one, on whom I placed most reliance, down to Westsea to watch Scott, while I arranged the capture of Bill and Alec.

My heart beat wildly as, with four policeman disguised as sailors, we rowed up to the rendezvous. I instructed my men that directly the two came in the boat they were to shove off, as it was hardly likely that they would find out the description in the dark, and when I said "Now" they were to get up and handcuff the pair.

We lay for some time so perfectly still that we could almost hear our hearts beat, for my men were suffering from supressed emotion as much as I myself. Presently two figures came slowly through the gloom and stood above us.

"Houp-la!" said one, just loud enough to be heard.

I responded with the same word, and rowed the boat close in. They came down, whilst I on the steps held in the boat. They peered at me doubtfully, but I said:

"It's all right; Mr. Scott couldn't come himself, so he sent me. I'm his sailing master. Jump in quick; he said we must waste no time."

Full of confidence, they obeyed, and sat beside me. We went out about thirty yards, when I said to one I took for Bill:

"Just go and sit in the bow; we're too many."

I could see the man quivering as Bill rose and began to walk carefully towards the bow.

He was just in the middle of the boat when I cried out: "Now," and turned on a dark lantern I had.

Instantly two policemen fell on each passenger, and in a moment they were handcuffed.

"Two of you row back, and you, Jones and Thomas, keep guard."

I will not waste words in describing the stupefaction of the twain.

"Be sure they've no weapons," I said, "before we land."

They were at once searched, and found they each had a revolver. We took them up the steps, hailed the two cabs we had in waiting, and took them to the station.

"What is the meaning of this?" said Bill, who was in the same cab as myself, when at last he found his tongue.

"Oh! only this," I said sweetly, "the next time you send your wife to meet somebody, you ought to make sure she will speak to the right person."

"Great Scott!" he groaned, "she's given us away," and, coward-like, he sobbed aloud.

When we got them to the station, we found that they were men we had never known before

When the charges were read over to them, Alec said: "Lord have mercy on us! It's the rope, Bill."

As I had foreseen, we got some very valuable information. There was a gang of five, with Scott as their leader.

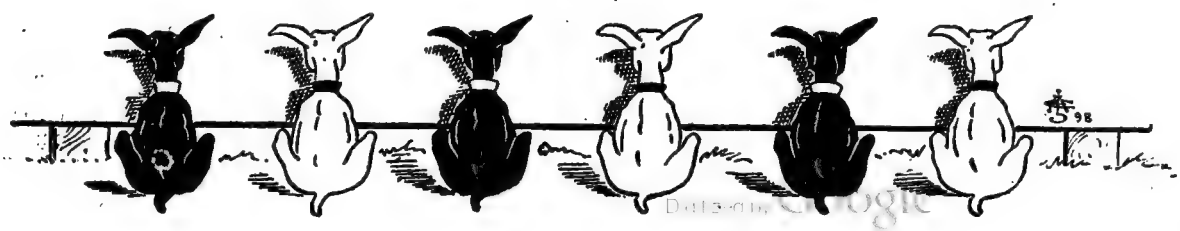
From what they said, he was an extremely daring man. He lived in grand style at Westsea, as I already knew. He seldom committed a robbery himself, but his was the master mind that arranged all. He moved in good society, and that aided him in his crimes, and many of his friends and acquaintances who had been robbed little thought that their charming guest was the head and front of the thief.

Next morning two of us went down to Westsea. We were very fortunate. He was on the station platform looking at the bookstall when he found each arm seized, and I said, "Edward Scott, I arrest you."

Our extreme caution was justified, for he fought like a wild beast, and we had to call assistance before we secured him.

The case created quite a sensation, and for a short time my praises were sung loudly. We also managed after a week to secure the remaining members of the gang. Bill and Alec escaped the rope for what I consider a worse fate—a life sentence.

But Scott did not escape. The Smith murder (I have no time to give you particulars) was brought home to him, and one wild March morning a flag that hung above a prison wall told that one villain in the world had paid the penalty of his crimes. F. W. HARRAL.



MIXED SENTIMENT.

I AND Slater were sharing diggings up Bloomsbury way, and looking back on the partnership now I am bound to believe that Slater got the best of it. He was easy-going and lazy to the last degree, impulsive and good-natured enough but totally unreliable and never out of a scrape for two consecutive weeks as long as I was with him.

At times the companionship of such a man was trying, and many a time and often I threatened to dissolve it summarily when Slater's reckless idiocy had plunged me into some predicament of a more than ordinary embarrassing nature; but somehow I never did.

For many reasons the arrangement was a convenient one, and Slater's easy-going nature was a wholesome tonic at times to one like myself who was apt to take the world's disappointments over-seriously. The breezy flippancy with which he could throw a rejected MS behind the stove and settle down to play nap while a host of greedy creditors hung about and threatened us with county courts and brokers' men was strengthening; and to hear him revile the finances when they were so diminutive that it seemed scarcely worth while was stimulating to a man who had the misfortune to possess a morbid dread of falling behind the just and lawful claims that he had contracted.

And beyond all these things there was "copy" in Slater's individuality. The wildest and most improbable ideas crossed his mind and were put into operation quite regardless of the result, though to do Slater even-handed justice the results were generally for others, he being content to preserve the joke alone for himself. In all save one instance did he do so, that is, and that was the affair of his nine and twentieth engagement, which I am going to tell you about.

Slater had been out all day, and as I was sporting the oak I hoped that he would remain out at any rate until I had got my manuscript completed and out of the way. But he didn't! He came in with a rush, in his accustomed fashion, throwing his hat to one side of the room, preparatory to squatting on the still wet sheets which I had been working over, and lighting his pipe.

"I'm in a bit of a mess, old chap, and I want you to help me out," he commenced, ignoring my glare of dissatisfaction and resentment.

"Oh," said I coldly. "What is it this time—forgery or a tailor's bill?"

"Don't try to be funny," he retorted. "It's too dismal. The fact is, it is that girl that I met at Sludgecomb, in the summer. You see, mooning about the beach together we got rather chummy and I somehow felt that I couldn't manage to live without her, so just after I returned to town I wrote and told her so."

"Good," said I chuckling. "I suppose you made your substantial and independent position quite clear at the same time. It must require an abnormal amount of impudence to invite a girl to come and take a share of an income which doesn't exist."

"I get more than you do anyhow," said Slater sourly. "I've made seventeen and a tanner this week from the *Gospel Greeting*. But we didn't get as far as that."

"No!" said I inquiringly. "Oh she doesn't reciprocate, I see, sensible girl! Never mind; let not sorrow dim your eye. Go for another."

"That's the confounded mischief of the thing; I have," said Slater dismally. "I met Minnie at the Museum this afternoon, and asked her the same thing in the interval of waiting. I thought the other one would be bound to refuse as it is nearly a fortnight since I wrote."

"And she did refuse," I suggested; "well that ought to straighten it out for you."

"Confound it, how dense you are," he grumbled. "She didn't refuse; they both reciprocate, and here am I set down for bigamy and not the ghost of a show of getting out of it that I can see. And the worst of it is, Loo—that's the Sludgecomb girl—has come up to London to stay with her married sister. Confound it! There ought to be a statute of limitations to apply to these affairs."

"There is," said I chuckling again as the humour of the situation struck me. "It's usually applied to the man though, and it limits him to one. The way out is limited too, and a bit unpleasant at that. Let's see," I continued checking them off slowly on my fingers. "There is bigamy one, suicide two, breach of promise three."

"You are a Job's comforter, upon my word. Is that a sample of your humour?" he grumbled rudely. "I don't wonder that it falls flat if it is."

"Sorry," said I, putting on a pipe. "Well, suppose you go over the thing again, summarise it so to speak, and then I'll tell you candidly what I should do, sup-

posing for the sake of argument that I ever could be such an ass—such an unprincip'ed ass"—I repeated, (emphas'sing the "unprincipled," and rubbing it in, for I was a bit nettled at the imputation on my professional skill) "as to get myself in such a hole."

"Well," commenced Slater, bolting down a retort that wouldn't have tended to turn away wrath, "there's Minnie—you know, that nice little girl who has a studio in Bloomsbury and does stuff for the *Pictures*. I like her the better of the two, though Loo is a jolly nice girl, and if she had only been a bit more prompt——"

Slater broke off and sighed dismally.

"Minnie—one," said I.

"Yes, and now the other one has accepted me in six sheets explaining that she had been unable before this to decide on such an important matter. Confound it, there ought to be some statute of limitations in these affairs."

"Clearly," said I. "But you made that remark before."

"And she's coming up to London to-morrow to her married sister," continued Slater feverishly twisting up some of my manuscript to light his pipe with.

"Well you had best see her and try to come to some arrangement," I suggested.

"But I can't," he wailed. "Minnie will be bound to hear of it if I do. Can't you see her for me and get her to go home again. You might tell her I am a bad lot, and advise her to have nothing to do with me, or say that I've been killed in a railway accident and couldn't come."

"Thanks," said I, "but I'm a bit engaged myself. Besides, it is rather an awkward sort of commission, and one that I don't care much about undertaking, to be perfectly frank."

"Well, you could pretend that you are me," he urged. "Say that you've had typhoid or something which accounts for your altered appearance. When she sees what an ugly-looking beggar you are likely she'll be only too glad to drop off on her own account."

The conceited little ass! I felt a strong temptation to kick him; but I dissembled and dwelt instead on the sweet innocence of my nature, which would never permit me successfully to deceive a confiding maiden in such a heartless way, to say nothing of the probable disapproval the lady with whom I hoped to have all things in common, save perhaps my pipe and boots and umbrella, when things brightened, might manifest.

"Oh, that won't matter," persisted Slater selfishly, "And, besides, you won't be you for the time being—you'll be me."

"Heaven forbid!" I ejaculated. I was thinking of Slater's exceedingly weak intellect, and his head, which suggested a badly constructed turnip of abnormal size; but when he fiercely demanded what I meant by that, I spared his feelings and intimated somewhat coldly instead that I was in no mood to take on the burden of a double engagement. "Besides," I explained, "however willing I might be to oblige you, I should be certain to make a mess of it. Diplomacy in such a delicate matter will be required of an order that it would only be conceited folly for me to pretend to."

Protest as I would, however, Slater was insistent, and at last he went so far as to say that I should "jolly well have to," and that it was absurd for a man to stand out about such a trifle.

That set my back up, and I told him pretty shortly that I would see him somewhere warmish before I would do anything of the sort.

"Ask Rogers to," said I. "It's more in his line than mine, and he'd enjoy a job of that sort."

"Well, you fat-headed cuckoo, why couldn't you suggest that to me before? It's the very thing," was Slater's retort. Off he went to concoct some rotten scheme with the worthy I had named, and I saw nothing more of him that night.

Rogers, I may as well mention, was one of our clan, the biggest, noisiest, and most erratic of a big, noisy and erratic brotherhood. He is a black and white man ostensibly, though to us he seemed to pick up a very fair living by doing nothing except smoke and irritate us in turns by crude and inconsiderate joking of the practical order. And it was to this man that Slater went with the very delicate commission that I had refused to undertake.

Slater knows a man in the theatrical line, and when, after a visit to him, the worthy couple turned up at my place to put their plan in operation, I myself was puzzled for the moment to discriminate between them, so marvellously had the one been copied in the other. Rogers is a heavier man than Slater, and that, to one who knew them both as well as I did, was likely to give their game away; but it was a remote contingency and I got thoughtful when I remembered the alibi by which Slater cleared himself the last time he was invited out to explain a slightly erratic course of behaviour which an unpoetical policeman realistically termed "d & d."

The precious couple were very lively over the deception they were contemplating, and I felt it incumbent on me to remonstrate with them. But Rogers had somehow contrived to picture Slater in the light of a well-meaning but weak-minded ass who had fallen prey to the machinations of some designing female, and he was inclined to regard his interference as rather meritorious than otherwise; and Slater—selfish as per usual—and seeing only the opportunity of getting out of an exceedingly tight quarter which he put to the credit of malignant chance alone, and not in any way to his own foolish conduct, told me with witty brevity to "shut up" and attend to my ink-slinging concerns. And then after lighting his pipe and giving Rogers a few parting instructions he went off and left us together.

Rogers wanted to have a few details concerning the affair he had recklessly engaged upon from an unprejudiced source; but of course I could tell him nothing except that he was a first-class ass to have consented to mix up in it. That much I did tell him, rubbing it in on every occasion, and to get square with me for it. Rogers sat about until late in the day and made himself a nuisance.

After that I suppose it got slow. The girl didn't call as they expected, and Rogers ambled about the room until I got into such a state of savage exasperation that I seriously contemplated shying my ink-pot at him. Then he said he should take the bull by the horns and go and call on her. He wasn't going to be made a fool of, any way, he said, and as he had gone to all the trouble of dressing up for the part he was hanged if he would drop it without at least catching sight of the fair enslaver who had run Slater into an actual proposal. It was a rattling good idea—for me, and I encouraged him to put it into shape straight off.

He thanked me for nothing and went, taking my tobacco along with him and leaving me smokeless. However, it was a cheap quittance, and I settled down to my work with a distinct sense of relief in the hope and expectation of then being able to accomplish something. But I didn't.

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An hour or so later Slater came in.

"Hello," said he, "where's Rogers? Has Miss Blake been?"

"No," said I, chuckling; "Rogers didn't like to be disappointed and so he's gone to call on her."

"There's a meddling, fat-headed fool for you," was the grateful response. "A clumsy ass like that is bound to make a mess of it. He'll disgust the girl before he's seen her ten minutes."

"Well, considering that owing to the superior attractions of 'Minnie' you have specially engaged Rogers to impersonate you in the most rowdy objectionable manner that he can contrive and for that very purpose, I shouldn't be surprised if he does," said I. "Rogers is copying you and he is a very realistic actor, you know. But what is the objection?"

"There isn't any superior attraction," retorted Slater surlily. "That other girl is off—she hadn't really accepted me, you know," he explained diffidently; "but her manner was affectionate and I was too jolly afraid of hurting her feelings to break off with her. But it seems that she's got that tow-headed ass Jenkins on the string—engaged to him for months, she told me as cool as a cucumber."

"Good,' said I, chuckling again. "Anyway, you'll have to stand by Rogers."

"I will—with a stick, if he goes and spoils my chance with Loo," retorted Slater grimly. "Hello, what's that? Great Scott!"

Slater's ejaculation was cut short by the appearance of a couple of ladies, who entered the room at this juncture, followed by the beaming Rogers. One, very young and very pretty, I judged to be the object of Slater's negative regard, and the elder was of course the married sister.

The affair was beginning to get interesting, and I chuckled inwardly as I rose to acknowledge the introduction. Rogers did it very well and with consummate cheek, and I had all my work cut out not to laugh aloud when he turned from me with a beaming grin and a "Hello, Rogers, old man, pleased to see you! Allow me to introduce," etc.

Slater squirmed and acknowledged the bow of the ladies with a stiff and somewhat stilted grace.

"Rogers is a very old friend of mine, you know," explained the joker. "He is supposed to be rather like me too, though I could never detect it myself." Mrs. Todney thought there was some slight resemblance; but Miss Blake said she should never have noticed it, in a tone that must have been a bit trying to Slater to hear. It seemed to me to emphasize some underlined note of scorn at the bare idea of comparing such a commonplace individual with her Tom.

Slater—the real Slater—got a bit higher on his stilts and was coldly courteous, while the genial humbug who was personating him remarked affably that we were going to have a cup of tea together.

"It's a bit cramped, old chap," he observed. "Bachelor's digs, you know; but if you like to stay we shall be pleased."

Slater went out and mooched around the streets with his pipe on and rage in his heart, while Rogers and I indulged in a very cosy little tea-party in which two at least of the party enjoyed themselves to the utmost.

I was interested in noting Roger's idea of choking the girl off. I don't rightly understand these matters; but it didn't seem to me to correspond at all with the rules for that purpose that Slater had laid down earlier in the day.

Rogers is a gentleman on occasions, and that was one of them. Added to this he was a devoted and enthusiastic lover, and I watched the game stealthily and wondered what the *dénouement* was to be.

Rogers took his *fiancée* to the Strand, where some exceptionally fine piece was running that evening. He asked me to accompany them; but I was busy and had to decline the invitation. Instead I stayed at home and had a private and picturesque display of profanity from Slater, who came in in a huff and seemed to have something on his mind and temper.

He was beautifully inconsistent, and he raged away about Rogers in a perfectly idiotic manner until I ventured to remind him that our mutual friend was really only obliging him in the matter, when all was said and done.

"Um, he seemed to find it pretty congenial," growled Slater. "I didn't want him to make love to the girl in that indecent fashion either. He was to choke her off, not trot her in to tea and off to theatres, leaving me to cool my heels out in the cold."

"You were invited and wouldn't come," said I sternly. "Besides, you see, he has got your reputation to maintain. You have such a way with you with girls, and if he hadn't lived up to it Miss Blake would have seen through the trick at once, and that would have been awkward."

"Do you think that is it?" queried Slater, catching at the suggestion in a pathetically silly manner.

"Certainly," said I chuckling. "It is to be hoped that he won't go and fall in love with her on his own account though. She is a wonderfully pretty girl and she has some cash too, I believe."

"Eh," shouted Slater.

"Cash," said I. "I gathered from her sister that the old man is senior partner in Blake and Boney, you know, the big shipping people."

Slater looked troubled and went off to bed early with his pipe, leaving me to my own devices and to catch up in the arrears of my work that the events of his silly scheming had entailed.

I ran against Rogers accidentally the next day. He was "doing" London in company with the young lady, who was under the impression that she was engaged to him, and I seized a favourable chance of giving him an idea of the altered position of affairs.

"That other girl is off, old man," I concluded, "and Slater seems to think that Loo can be on again. It's a rotten affair altogether and no business of mine; but, if you have any feeling in the matter I should advise you to keep away a bit and make it straight with the girl as soon as you can."

Rogers grinned, and after a little general conversation we parted.

"I say, old chap, I'm engaged," said Slater a week or two later.

"It sounds like a familiar complaint." I retorted. "Have you put things straight with Miss Blake then?"

"She—no, I had forgotten all about her," said Slater in lofty disdain. "By the way, what has become of Rogers?"

"Oh, he's engaged, too, I believe," said I dryly. "One fool makes many you know."

I suppose it was a case of "A rose by any other name."

Any way, it was Rogers' eldest hopeful that shied a brick through my kitchen window last week, and the old gentleman who reproved him answered to the name of "grandad" and was once the senior partner in the firm of Blake and Boney Ltd.

R. Andom.

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A COUPON WORTH £1,000.

If the Figures you write on this Coupon should be the only correct forecast made, it will bring you in £1,000. In the last Competition two coupons similar to this brought in £500 each to two lucky individuals.

TO win this substantial sum of money, all you have to do is to fill up the coupon below, giving in the proper place the number of births and the number of deaths which will occur in the thirty-three great towns in England and Wales for the week ending July 1st, 1899.

Then write down your name and address, and ask the newsagent or bookstall clerk from whom you obtained this copy of "*S.S.*" to insert his name and address in the space provided. Although such a course is obviously to his advantage, it is not compulsory for the coupon to bear his signature.

Newsagents and bookstall clerks may sign any number of coupons.

To the person whose attempt is correct we will pay the sum of **£1,000.**

To the newsagent or bookstall clerk whose name appears on the winning coupon we will pay the sum of **£100**, and **£5** to each of the boys attached to the bookstall from which the paper was bought.

If no competitor estimates the correct number of births and deaths, the £1,000 will be awarded to the individual whose forecast is most nearly correct.

In the event of two or more persons being correct, the £1,000 will be divided amongst them. This condition applies also to the £100 for the newsagent or bookstall clerk, and the £5 for bookstall boys.

One competitor may send in any number of attempts.

It must be clearly understood that all persons who enter for this competition must abide by the decision of the Editor in any question that may arise in connection with the competition.

As a guide to your estimate we give below the number of Births and Deaths which have taken place in the thirty-three largest towns in England and Wales for the corresponding period during the past three years.

The figures published by the Registrar-General will be taken as correct. On December 2nd, 1898, a competition similar to this was declared legal by the Appeal Court.

Registered during the Week Ending July 4th, 1896.		Registered during the Week Ending July 3rd, 1897.		Registered during the Week Ending July 2nd, 1898.	
Births.	Deaths.	Births.	Deaths.	Births.	Deaths.
6,372	3,691	7,115	3,106	6,575	3,203

All attempts to be addressed to the Editor, Short Stories, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and the envelope to be marked in the left-hand corner with the word: "Births."

This Competition closes on Wednesday, June 28th.

S. S.

My estimate is — { *Births* ..... / *Deaths* ..... } *Write in large Figures.*

Name .....

Address .....

*Newsagent or Bookstall Clerk** .....

.....

* If a bookstall clerk, the name of the station will be sufficient.

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5,000	„	Silver Brooches.
5,000	„	Gold-Plated Pencil-cases.
5,000	„	Silver Bangles.
5,000	„	Penknives.
5,000	„	Pen and Pencil Boxes (3 deckers.)
10,000	„	Paint Boxes.
10,000	„	Boxes of Dominoes.
10,000	„	Pearl and Porcupine Penholders.
10,000	„	Compasses.
10,000	„	Boxes of Crayons.
20	Prizes of	ONE POUND each.
20	„	TEN SHILLINGS each.

From now until November 25th a coupon will appear on the front page of cover of PEARSON'S WEEKLY, HOME NOTES, SHORT STORIES, and PASTIMES. To the person who collects the greatest number of these coupons and sends them to us on a date we shall specify later, we will give the sum of One Hundred Pounds; to the collector of the second greatest number we will give Fifty Pounds, and so on until the whole 100,043 prizes have been awarded.

SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER.

This is the only competition that has ever been devised in which every competitor will get a prize.

All the articles enumerated above are of the best make and well worth possessing, therefore no prize will be given to any person who sends fewer than 200 coupons.

The prizes altogether will cost us about £10,000.

Ask any friend of yours who reads our papers to give you his coupons.

The Competition will run for twenty-nine weeks. If the members of your family take in "P.W.," "H.N.," "S.S.," and "Pastimes," and you collect the coupons from each, this will give you 114 coupons. You can easily obtain from your friends the balance to make up the 200, in which case you will be certain of getting a prize.

A TIP.

Don't be afraid to send only 200 coupons. Sometimes the best competitions ever devised miss fire. People say, "What is the use of my going in for it? I won't win anything." These are just the occasions on which you will. If everybody thought the same, your 200 coupons would win you £100.

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Bearding the Lion.

My word! what a hot day it was (said Westwood)—sweltering hot! I was sitting, I remember, by the side of the lake, trying to make up my mind whether I wouldn't bathe in spite of the alligators; and that infernal sheet of water, with its blue surface, and the air over it shaking in the sun, reminded me of rolled iron, just when the red heat's out of it, and the blue look comes on to it, so that you might think it's cool until you saw the heat quiver up.

I had a poor beast of a dog with me, and tried to make him go in and try the alligators first, and it was comical to see him; he'd just touch the water first with one paw, and then start back and watch intently, with his ears cocked and his head on one side; then he'd try the other paw, then his mouth; and, thirsty as he was, when he felt the water touch his tongue, he'd start back wilder than ever, shaking his head, and rubbing his paws over it as if the water really were the hot iron it made one think of.

"The alligators are on the look-out," says I to myself. "I can't cool myself that way." So I sat still, in that frizzling heat, and said hard things at the water, and the earth, and the sky.

You don't know what a bad temper really is until you're being tried by heat of that kind. Suddenly I heard what seemed the sound of a horse galloping.

"By Jove!" thinks I to myself, "that gentleman must be in a precious hurry to kill his horse, and try for a sunstroke for himself. I wonder what *he's* flying from?"

But I hadn't time to wonder long, for in a moment I saw a man galloping up from Tom Crewe's direction—Tom Crewe was a kind of foreman of Jim Blake's—as hard as he could towards my house, and in almost as quick as it takes to tell you he'd reined up, close in front of me.

"Westwood!" he said in a strangled gasp, "you must help me! I've killed a man!"

I stood still where I was, and looked at him.

"I tell you you must help me!" he repeated, shaking in his saddle. "Don't stand staring at me like that! This is how it was," he said cringingly, "and you'll see it wasn't my fault, and that you're bound to give me a hand.

"You know Tom Crewe? Well, I was down at his place, because I had a little business on with him; and it's very hot to day, so we thought we'd have a drink And he got out his keg of whisky, and we took a drain, and then he told me to start my yarn, which I did. What came over him I don't know; but there was an axe lying handy, and all of a sudden he takes this up in his hand, and walks round and round me, as I was talking, and keeps on dropping it on to me, first on my leg, then on my shoulder, then on my neck.

"I took it quiet at first, because I know what a queer customer Crewe is; but presently I couldn't stand it any longer. 'You jes' drop that tool,' I said. 'How can I talk properly when you're playing like that?' But he only laughed and went on fooling with his axe worse than ever, until it dropped on its edge on my arm. Look here!"

I noticed then for the first time that the left arm of his coat was soaked in blood, and that there was a lot of clotted blood, too, on his left hand. It had trickled down there and dried.

"That was too much for me," he said—and it was a horrible thing the way his voice came out through his throat, all dried with whisky, and heat, and fear—"and I jumped up, and faced Crewe, and told him to drop that, or it'd be the worse for him. 'You mean fool,' he says to me, 'you sit down again, and git along with your business or it'll be the worse for *you!*' Well, I don't know how it all happened after that; but I'd gone at him, and he'd dropped his axe, and I'd picked it up while he'd put his hand behind him.

"But I knew what was coming next, and before he'd time to get his revolver out I'd brought down the axe over his head and killed him.

"Good Heavens!" he ended, in a kind of hoarse scream, "what an awful sight he was!

"And you'll help me, Westwood—now, won't you? You see it wasn't my fault."

What was exactly up with me, I can't tell you. I think the heat head got fairly into my head; and it

seemed to me that it was a kind of consciousness of those two drinking and trying to murder each other that had nearly brought the panic on me just before; anyhow, I felt a longing to go straight for Marshall and kill him right away, as he sat there quivering in the burning sunlight before me.

But I kept my hands in, and, instead, I fell into a rage; I confounded him and Crewe, for a couple of mad blackguards, to be drinking neat spirit at that time of the day, in that blinding heat: and I told Marshall that I didn't believe a word of his pack of lies, and to go, for I wouldn't move a finger to help him.

He sat steadier for a moment or two. "You'll help me, Westwood," he said, "or I'll go on the bush, and you'll rue it!"

But that only made me worse. "Go on the bush, and be hanged to you!" I shouted. "The bush is the only fit place for the whole lot of you."

Before I'd finished speaking he'd gone, and if hadn't been that I saw the cloud of dust his horse kicked up, and heard him galloping away, I'd have thought that I'd had a touch of delirium as I stood there in the doorway.

Well, I went on to my grove; but what with the heat and the fury I'd been in with Marshall, and the story he'd told me, and the idea of the dead man away down there, lying baking in the sun, I couldn't do a stroke of work for the life of me, and I felt that I *must* go down to Crewe's and lay him in his house decently.

I hadn't gone far before I met a nigger running away as fast as he could go, and when he go near I saw that he had that queer grin on his face, and that kind of smoky ash colour which show that niggers are in a deadly fright.

"Hullo, Sam!" I said. "What's wrong with you?"

"O Lor'! Mistah Wasstud, sah," he quavered, "Mistah Kroo!"

"Well," says I, with my heart seeming to roll about inside me; "and what of him?"

"Oh! Mistah Kroo, he jes' awful, sah," said the nigger. "I'se gwine to tell him breakfus' reddy, an' cum roun' de corner, when thar was Mistah Kroo, walkin' up an' down in front of de house, an' his head was cut in half, an' he was saying, 'I *won't* die!' An' he's clutchin' his gun, an' he points it to me, sah, an' say, 'Go away, you niggah! You go, or you'se dead niggah.' So I'se run up fas' to tell you, sah; and what I'se do now, sah? I'se not gwine back Mistah Kroo, for ten thousan' pounds, sah."

Then the fright took him again, and he ran off as fast as he could lay his great splay feet to the ground.

So here was I going down to pick up a dead man, and there was that very dead man walking up and down in front of his house declaring he wouldn't die, and giving snakes to niggers.

But I went on, and presently came in sight of Crewe's house. There he was, sure enough, staggering up and down in the sun, with a gun in his hand; and when I got within earshot I heard him swearing to himself, just as the nigger had said, that he *wouldn't* die. He didn't see me till I was within about twenty paces of him; he was too busy vowing he wouldn't die.

But all of a sudden he heard me, and started round, facing me. There was a great cut which came clear down from his head to his left eye. He staggered back against the wall of his hut and raised his gun, aiming it point-blank at me.

"What do you want?" he spluttered. "Come sniggering down here in the hopes you'd see Tom Crewe die! But I won't; I *won't!* And I'll have no fool hankering round to finish me. Now just you go away! You come one step nearer, and you'll find yourself where you hoped I was, and where I won't go."

"Now, look here, Tom Crewe," I said, "that's all gammon, you know! I've come down here to see whether I can't lend you a hand; I've brought you a chair, because I know you haven't got one. As to your pop-gun there, you ain't going to frighten me that way, you know. You and Jim Blake are always going round saying you'll shoot everyone."

"Yes, an' we *do* shoot 'em too, now and again," he said, with a kind of leer which, under that gaping wound, made my heart turn cold. "Now, will you clear, or won't you? If you ain't showing your back by the time I count thirty, I'd sooner be me than you, for all I got this scratch on my face from that fool, Marshall. Go."

He was fingering his trigger, and I thought to myself it was no use trying to reason with a man in that condition. So I turned and went; but I left my chair there, on the sand, so that he might get it if he felt a mind that way.

As I was sauntering back with my eyes on the ground, thinking I appeared to be pretty mean, and wondering whether I hadn't been a coward not to run in and close with Crewe, and make him take my help, I suddenly saw a shadow, and looking up, I saw Phœbe Blake passing me quickly in the direction from which I was coming. It's a queer thing how delicate and refined some of those backwood girls are, in spite of every kind of thing against them in the way of bringing up! And Phœbe Blake was one of that kind; a beautiful sweet pale face, great big dark eyes, dark wavy silky hair, and a tall slight figure in a white dress; you might have thought that you could blow her away with a breath. As I've told you before, I wasn't in much with the Blakes, and I scarcely knew Phœbe more than to say "Good morning" to, which was what I did now.

"Good morning, Mr. Westwood," says she, and passed on.

But it suddenly struck me that she might be going to see Tom Crewe, and that I'd better warn her of the danger. So I told her what had been on, and how Crewe wouldn't let anyone come near him, and that she'd better turn back home again. She gave me such a look that I tell you it's me you might have blown away with a breath instead of her.

"And do you mean to tell me," she said, in a voice which cut me like a knife, "that you've left that poor, daft, wounded thing away there without any help because you were afraid? And they told me that you're the pluckiest man in all this district for the way in which you bested my brother! I wonder what the rest may be like!"

But she turned round and was walking back beside me.

"At any rate, Miss Blake," I couldn't help saying, "I'm glad that you'll not be so rash as to go on."

"I'm going back to fetch some linen and things, to dress that poor Crewe's wound," she said shortly.

Then I didn't say any more, but walked back with her, and at her gate asked permission to wait, and carry the things back for her as it was very hot.

"I'm sure you're very kind, Mr. Westwood," said she; "but really, if you're nervous, I'd much sooner go alone."

After which you'll understand that if it had been to the very gates of death that she was going to walk, I'd have walked there with her.

We scarcely passed another word on the way back to Crewe's; I walked beside her, carrying a basket of things which she'd put together, and she with her right hand in her skirt pocket. When we got near we saw that Tom Crewe hadn't touched my chair, and was leaning against the door of the hut, with his back turned to us, and his head on his hands, rocking backwards and forwards, as if in great pain. He'd set his gun against the wall, just handy. I looked at Phœbe Blake half doubtful and half curious; for I scarcely knew, really, whether I ought to let her go on and quietly risk death at the hands of Crewe, whom she'd come to help. After all, if someone was to die, it seemed to me a great way better that it should be he.

I thought, too, that when she saw the brute, and took note of his gun, and got close up to the danger, she'd probably tail off a bit, and stop to think. Not she! She'd just the sign of a frown between her eyes, and her pretty lips were set a little tight together, and she might have been a shade paler; but she was looking straight ahead, and walked on as calmly as if she'd been going up into a shop to ask the price of a hat.

We got closer and closer, and still Crewe didn't change his position; when, just as we might have been about twenty yards away, almost as we had passed my chair, he heard us, and twisted himself round with his hand on his gun.

"You again!" he choked out at me, with an oath. "Well, take what you've come for, then!"

He was raising his gun to his shoulder, and I couldn't help checking my pace, when I saw Phœbe Blake, instead of stopping, start running forward, whisking her hand out of her pocket.

"Up with your hands, Tom Crewe!" she called out.

No man of Crewe's experience will answer "No" to that order when he's not first. Down clattered his gun; up went his hands; and there was Phœbe Blake standing up to him, not eight paces off, covering him point blank with a revolver.

"Mr. Westwood," said she, keeping her eye well fixed upon him, "would you please come and pick up that gun?" I did so.

"Now, Tom Crewe," she says, "you'll just walk into our house, and keep quiet, and let me dress your head."

In he staggered, quiet as a lamb, and Phœbe followed him in.

I heard him say, "Oh, my head! my head! Oh, my head! But I *won't* die!" and she said, "Oh, poor thing! poor thing!" and then she called out to me to come in and help her.

It was a heart turning piece of work; but we got through it, and put Tom on his kind of bed, and he vowed he wouldn't move; he was as grateful now, poor devil, as a dog, when we'd dressed a wound for him.

Then Phœbe came outside the house, and, to my surprise, started crying as if her heart would break.

I stood there like a fool—every man is a fool, when a woman cries—not knowing what to say; until at last I jerked out something about her courage.

Presently she dried her eyes, and looked up at me, and never to my dying day shall I forget what a sweet, touching sight she was.

"Don't talk to me of courage, Mr. Westwood," said she. "I was in mortal terror. I hadn't any right to let you come with me! He'd have done nothing to me, and he'd sworn before to kill you if you came nearer. But I *daren't* go alone after what you told me, and I beg your pardon for what I said when you met me—I do, indeed. What they all say of you is quite true, you are indeed brave."

I felt a bigger fool than ever; but I said I was ashamed of myself, and that I wished I had her spirit, and that, as for her handiness with a revolver——There she put out her little hand to interrupt me.

"Revolver!" she said, with a bit of a laugh, but her face was still half-turned to cry. "That's the worst of all! I can't stand fire-arms—I'm in deadly fear of them. Jim gave me that little revolver, in case, he said, it might ever come in useful. *And it's never been loaded!*"

"But, bless me!" said I, "then . . . and when you stood facing Tom Crewe . . . and . . . do you mean to tell me . . . not . . . but you had your hand in your pocket while you walked even!"

"I can't help it!" she said, always half-laughing and half-crying: "I *hate* the things. And I was nervous at carrying it in my pocket, although I *knew* it wasn't loaded!"

* * * * *

"That's enough for you to-day," said Westwood abruptly, after a short pause, with a slight break in his voice; "but I thought it'd interest you to hear about the first time I had any real speech of Phœbe Blake. You'll like to know that Crewe recovered; any other man'd have died; but he vowed he wouldn't—it was a wonderful thing to see that man fight with death—and he kept his word. He's horribly disfigured, but he's about still."

"And Marshall?" I asked.

"He never came back," said Westwood. "And it was well he didn't."

V. E. Ravin.

Bishop Horne had his dignity considerably taken down when he arrived to take possession of the episcopal palace at Norwich, in 1791. Being amazed at the number of spectators on the occasion, he turned round upon the steps, and exclaimed:

"Bless us! bless us! what a concourse of people."

"Oh, my lord," said a bystander, "this is a mere nothing to the crowd last Friday to see a man hanged."

Man's Inanition, Woman's Intuition.

The shortest love letters on record are said to be the following:

"Dear Clara,—

"?

"Tom."

"Dear Tom,—

"I will.

"Clara."

They were engaged to be married, and called each other by their first names, Tom and Fanny, and he was telling her how he had always liked the name of Fanny, and how it sounded like music in his ear.

"I like the name so well," he added, as a sort of clincher to the argument, "that when sister Clara asked me to name her pet terrier, I at once called it Fanny, after you, dearest."

"I don't think that was very nice," said the fair girl, edging away from him; "how would you like to have a dog named after you?"

"Why, that's nothing," said Tom, airily; "half the cats in the country are named after me."

They don't speak now.

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An Original Wooing.

The young man leant carelessly against the piano and listened to the young woman who sat on the piano stool.

"It's awfully good of you, Jack," she was saying, "and I really like you very much, because you're such a jolly fellow and never bore me; but when it comes to marrying you—why, that's a different matter. The idea is not actually displeasing to me, I will admit. Still, it isn't exactly a proposition that arouses my enthusiasm."

"Um!" said Jack.

"You see," continued the young woman, "it has always been a cardinal principle of my life to attain my ends by unusual methods—to get out of the rut, as it were—and people who are actuated by a similar motive are the people who command my admiration. Therefore I doubt if any man will succeed in screwing my affections up to the marrying point as long as he conducts his wooing in the old familiar way. See?"

"I see," said Jack.

A moment of silence ensued, during which the young man looked lingeringly upon the beauty of the young woman. He realised that he had been tenderly rejected by the only girl he ever saw who was "just his style," and he felt disposed to enter the lists and have a joust with fate—to refuse to accept her decision as final.

He also felt a strange and abnormal craving for a cigar. Rousing himself, he stood erect and addressed the young woman.

"Now, look here, Mollie," he said, "you've got to marry some time, for girls like you are not born to a life of single blessedness; but if you wait for some fellow to go after you in a new and original way, I'm afraid you'll wait several years. Originality is at a premium these days. Nevertheless, I don't propose to give up all hope myself. I have a bright idea occasionally, and by arduous effort I might even evolve a brand new style of courtship. However, I have nothing available in this line to offer just at present, so I'll say good-night."

The young woman looked up and smiled sweetly as he turned to go.

"Good-night, Jack," said she.

An hour later found Jack comfortably seated in the easiest chair his club afforded, blue smoke wreaths curling above his head and a glass at his elbow. His appearance was not, strictly speaking, such as to indicate that his heart and hand had just been respectfully declined by the girl he loved, for his was one of those buoyant natures that never fail to rise triumphant above the disappointments of life.

Still, his face wore an unusually serious expression as he lounged in the big chair and smoked his cigar, and he looked as though he was engaged in solving some abstruse problem in philosophy. As a matter of fact, he was racking his brains for a new way to "make love."

The mental pressure under which he was labouring caused the cigar and the contents of the glass to diminish with considerable rapidity. In the meantime schemes of various colours and conditions chased each other across his dome of thought only to be finally rejected as impracticable, and a dozen times he resolved to "leave off making a fool of himself." But exactly the same number of times did he return to the charge.

After every failure and every resolution he found himself spurred on to one more effort by a tantalising vision of the young woman as he left her on the piano stool, while through it all he assiduously applied epithets to her propensity for "getting out of the rut."

When the twenty-seventh scheme had been reached, progress in this interesting evolution of a method was momentarily interrupted by the advent of a fellow-clubman, who paused as he was passing the big chair and surveyed the unusually sober countenance of its occupant.

"Good evening," he observed pleasantly.

"Have you used Jugg's Beautifier?" supplemented Jack shortly. He didn't like the interruption.

"What's the matter to-night?" queried the other. "Anything wrong?"

"No," replied the young man. "This cigar is all right."

"Then," said his friend, "you must have run up against a case of love grown cold. If so, take my advice and don't despair."

"There's Fleecem's Union Underwear," murmured Jack.

The other laughed.

"My dear boy," he said, "when you read the magazines, you should confine yourself to the literary pages. The others are undoubtedly interesting and attractive, but they exercise too great an influence on your conversation. What are you thinking about that makes you look so serious?"

Jack sighed for the first time since the episode with the young woman.

"How to attain the unattainable," he answered.

"A fascinating problem, truly."

"Yes, but the solution is difficult."

"Not particularly so, providing you go about it in the right way."

"How would you do it?"

"How? Oh, I'd advertise. That's the only way results of any sort can be obtained nowadays. Well, good-bye, old man. Sorry I interrupted your cogitations."

The intruder moved away, while Jack took the cigar from his lips and gazed abstractedly at the retreating form.

Then suddenly he started and sat erect in the big chair.

"By Jove!" said he.

Jack always said, "By Jove!" when struck by a brilliant idea; therefore he considered it eminently appropriate to the present occasion. In fact, the idea that now possessed the young man, seemed so

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uncommonly brilliant that he thought it merited a repetition of the remark.

"By Jove!" he said again.

Then he flung away his cigar, and gazed earnestly at the smouldering stump for five minutes, after which he ejaculated:

"I'll do it! If she doesn't call that getting out of the rut, I'll give it up."

With one of the young man's energetic disposition to think is to act, so when he had finally decided to lure the young woman's affections in the direction of himself by means of a personally conducted advertising campaign, he lost no time in commencing operations.

He knew that such an original and up-to-date plan to woo a "high born maiden" bore the earmarks of audacity, but that very fact only lent it an added charm so far as the young man was concerned. Then, too, it was indisputably out of the ordinary, which ought to prove a favourable characteristic so far as the young woman was concerned. The scheme seemed good. Jack's spirits returned, and the world once more took a rosy aspect.

As a preliminary step in the matter, the young man hunted up his late companion for the purpose of working that individual for a little information. He didn't know much about the gentle art of advertising himself, therefore he felt the need of a few hints; and when he succeeded in finding his friend in the billiard-room watching an exciting game, he drew him on one side and propounded a leading question.

"Look here, Tom," said he, "you're a journalist and must know something about advertising. What are the essential features of a good advertisement?"

"What have you?" asked Tom. "A dyspepsia cure or a new food for infants?"

"Neither," replied Jack. "I merely have curiosity."

"In that case," said Tom, "it can be easily satisfied. Select a couple of attractive catch-lines, fill in with a few terse sentences, and, if possible, offer something free. This sort of advertisement will sell anything that's made."

"Ah! thanks," said Jack. "Close game, isn't it?"

And he returned to the big chair.

His next move was to order newspapers and writing materials. Then, having secured them, he spent an hour diligently studying the advertising columns of the papers and examining the various forms of advertisements, following which he deliberated with himself concerning the amount of space he should use in carrying out his scheme.

Considering the character of the "goods," he concluded that a delicate little space of about three inches would be the proper size, and that the best position would be on the page where the fearfully and wonderfully constructed maidens were wont to pose arrayed in the latest fashions. So far as selecting a medium was concerned he didn't have much trouble. He remembered which was Mollie's favourite weekly paper and he accordingly decided to place his business in its columns. Then he turned his attention to his first ad.

This, he found, looked easier than it really was. Good catch-lines failed to suggest themselves with any degree of promptitude, while the "something free" seemed absolutely impossible, and a large quantity of good writing-paper was immolated on the strangely united altars of love and publicity as a result of the young man's efforts. But another examination of the newspapers obviated the former difficulty, and after a long cogitation he hit on an idea that overcame the latter: whereupon he once more seized his pen with feverish haste, and finally succeeded in producing an affair that struck him as being attractive, unique, and appropriate, and possessing qualities which he thought ought to have some effect.

And the pioneer advertising campaign having for its object the wooing of a woman was at last begun.

On the following Saturday advertising circles were mildly amazed to see in the usually sedate columns of that weekly this remarkable advertisement:

MOLLIE KNOWS

all about the state of my affections, because I have already given her information concerning it. Moreover, she will doubtless be able to recall the fact that on the occasion of our last interview I intimated that I would not take "no" for an answer. In this connection I wish to mention for her benefit that, while there are many thousands of words in the English language,

ONE GIVES RELIEF,

if it is the right one. And I will also suggest that the little word "Yes" will relieve me of further anxiety, and make both her and me happy for life.

To write "Yes" and to forward it to my address, nothing more is required than a sheet of note-paper, an envelope, and a postage-stamp. I will furnish these articles free on application.—JACK.

Now, there were several hundreds of Mollies and an equal number of Jacks in the city; therefore these two names failed to furnish a clue to the identity of either the advertiser or the "people" he wanted to reach. Of course, there was much speculation indulged in and several theories were advanced; but it was generally believed that the advertisement was not to be taken seriously—that it was merely an advance ad. on the part of some enterprising manufacturer to attract public attention, and that this space would ere long be filled with the unrivalled merits of a new patent medicine, beauty promoter, or brand of complexion soap.

Jack had counted on a condition something like this following the appearance of his ad., so he was perfectly satisfied with the result so far as the general public was concerned. But he was naturally very anxious to know the particular effect produced by this unique cause, feeling sure that the young woman would be able to fathom the mystery and grasp the situation at once. There was, however, no way of satisfying himself immediately on this point, and therefore he could not yet decide whether or not wooing a girl by advertising was likely to prove a profitable enterprise.

To tell the truth, he felt rather tremulous when he considered the matter calmly, but nerved himself with the consoling thought that he was certainly getting out of the rut.

"Moreover," he reflected, "since advertising has, according to all accounts, won wealth many a time, why should it not win love once? I'll write another."

The week passed very slowly to Jack. Also, it passed without bringing a reply to his advertisement; but as he scarcely expected such quick returns, he was not greatly disappointed thereat.

When Saturday again arrived the paper was eagerly sought by that select coterie of individuals, yclept, "ad-men" who help the world to wag by "promoting trade," and therein was found, in the same position, and occupying about the same space, another curious advertisement, attractively yet delicately displayed, which read thus:

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WHEN MOLLIE SMILES

she doesn't do it in exactly the same way that several fellows of my acquaintance do their "smiling," but the effect is even more intoxicating.

In fact, so delightful is Mollie's smile that I am quite positive the

CHILDREN CRY FOR IT,

and to acquire exclusive rights in this desirable article I am ready to give in exchange a heart full of love.

The transaction may be consummated at once if she will forward to me a simple "yes," the paper, envelope, and postage stamp, for which purpose I will furnish free on application.

JACK.

By the time this second ad. appeared, the young man had lost all nervousness about the probable result of his audacity, and he even decided to make his advertising campaign more extensive and vigorous if necessary. In short, he was now fully determined to carry the affair to a definite conclusion.

He subscribed for all the journals devoted to the science of publicity that he heard of, sat up at night conning their pages for available ideas, and finally went so far as to visit an advertising "expert," who said "I" ninety-seven times in five minutes' conversation, and charged Jack two guineas for performing the feat.

The result of all he read, and all he heard was his safe arrival at the conclusion that keeping everlastingly at it would win the girl, or at least some sort of recognition from the girl, and acting on this principle, he proceeded to insert in the next Saturday's issue his third announcement.

AFTER THE WEDDING

march has been played, and I can call Mollie my own, I shall at once commence active operations, having in view her future comfort. My one object in life will then be to show her how to be happy though married, and if I can help it,

THAT WEARY FEELING

will never chase the brightness from her azure eyes, nor the roses from her cheeks. Isn't this proposition worth considering?

When ready to write "yes," remember that I will furnish the necessary articles, guaranteed first quality, *free on application*.—JACK.

The young man had now reached about the same state of mind as is enjoyed by the gambler who plays with the intention of "breaking" either the bank or himself. His habitual light and airy manner had been suspended temporarily, and his entire attention was devoted to making his advertising campaign bring forth results of some sort.

He wanted a letter from the young woman, and he wanted that letter to contain a denunciation or an acceptance.

Therefore, when three ads. had appeared without bringing him a single reply, he began to consider a way in which he could re-enforce his newspaper advertising, and with this end in view he evolved the scheme of erecting a bill-board on a vacant plot of ground opposite Mollie's home.

Accordingly he called at the office of a billposter and engaged him to make the necessary arrangements. Then he dropped a line to a well-known poster artist, requesting the latter to call at his address.

The evolution of this project and completion of arrangements for carrying it out kept Jack busy the greater part of the fourth week, its close being marked by the appearance of another newspaper advertisement.

This time the young man had redoubled his exertions in the ad.-writing line, the result being the following convincing statement:

A MAN LOVES BEST

that which he thinks of most. Consequently the time he devotes to thinking about different matters indicates in what proportion his love belongs to each one.

By close observation and accurate calculation I have discovered that I devote all but a quarter per cent. of my time to thinking of Mollie, and so my love for Mollie is

ALL THAT IS PURE:

I trust that she will give this interesting fact her attention and consideration. Beware of imitations, and do not be led into accepting "something just as good."

"Yes" is a small word and easily written. To facilitate the matter I will send a sheet of fine note-paper, with envelope to match (also a postage-stamp) *free on application*.

JACK.

On the evening of the publication of this masterpiece the young man held a conference with the poster artist behind closed doors.

"What I want," said Jack, "is a series of good designs showing a happy home in which the young wife is surrounded by every comfort and all that sort of thing. That's the main idea. The details I leave with you."

"And the wording?" queried the artist.

"There will be no wording," Jack answered.

The artist looked surprised.

"That's unusual in poster advertising," he said.

"I hope it is," replied Jack. "The—er—business I'm engaged in is rather unusual itself. Oh, yes. I also desire——"

But as to just what more the young man did desire in the poster line the artist was left in ignorance, for an interruption occurred at this moment in the shape of a loud knock and the entrance of a servant with a telegram.

Jack felt very much annoyed at the interruption. He wanted to have his new idea developed as soon as possible, and hated to delay the outlining of his plans by a single second. However, he opened the envelope and glanced at the contents.

One glance seemed to be sufficient.

He sprang to his feet, and brought his fist down upon the table with startling force.

"By Jove!" said Jack.

The artist appeared interested.

Remembering his visitor, the young man succeeded in reducing himself to a condition of comparative calmness and turned to the artist.

"I have changed my mind," he announced. "I shall not use posters."

"But——" began the artist.

"That's all," said Jack tersely.

And the artist departed without a word.

Left alone the young man hunted up a decanter. He felt a trifle faint.

Next, the excitement under which he was labouring demanded action, so he spent five minutes stalking up and down the apartment, staccato passages in the march being furnished by occasional assaults upon the unresisting table.

Then he sat down and gazed at the photograph of a girl for another five minutes, after which he re-read the telegram. It said:

JACK,—Please send at once envelope, paper, and postage stamp free on application, as advertised.—MOLLIE.

A few hours later the young man once more leaned against the piano and listened to the young woman on the piano stool, who smiled at him sweetly.

"We will help one another, and get out of the rut together, Jack," she was saying in a soft whisper.

JAMES BARRETT KIRK.

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THE RED MEN OF THE DUSK

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ROMANCE.

By JOHN FINNEMORE.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Sir John Postgate.

The morrow brought ample proof that Sir John Postgate kept a sharp watch on Butley Croft, for as the shadow upon the great gilded dial marked noon up he rode, his son at his side. I was near the head of the main avenue chopping a huge, fallen elm branch into sizeable pieces for firing when the clatter of their horses' feet came behind me. I took no notice, and Sir John hailed me.

"Who are you, and what may you be doing here?" he cried.

I chopped away as stolidly as possible, and a whip-lash snapped on my hat as the son flicked lightly at me. I looked up, and oh, how uneasily my disguise sat upon me under those keen, grim old eyes.

"*Dim Saesneg*," I growled.

Both of them stared at me in good earnest now.

"Pray—" began the old man, but I interrupted him with a swift rush of a couple of my parrot sentences, and pointed to the house. The extraordinary gibberish set the younger man laughing.

"Tis a fellow from the Tower of Babel," simpered Jack Postgate.

At this moment out came Roger Thorne, eager to interpose between us.

"Whom have we here?" cried Jack Postgate, flicking his whip across me again, while my heart swelled furiously within me.

"A Welshman, Sir John," replied Roger, "A poor Taffy, with never a word of our language."

"And what brings him here?" demanded the elder man, taking no more notice of me, and riding forward to the front of the house.

I heard Roger's voice, speaking as he marched beside the horse, but I could not catch his words, and I turned again to my wood chopping, and smote the branch lustily, wishing it were John Postgate's insolent neck.

I had disliked him since we were boys, and we had fought out the battle of the day more than once with fists, while our fathers were busy with deadlier weapons.

In those encounters it had taken me all my time to gain the victory, for he was near three years older than I; but it would be another affair now, and I looked after him, and clenched my fist and longed for the chance.

He looked no Puritan figure, either, as he pranced along on his spirited nag; he was as fine as a peacock. His hat was plumed, his sword-belt was richly embroidered, and his rapier hilt was as gaily worked as any Cavalier I had ever seen. There was not so much lace perhaps as a fop on our side loves, but his clothes were bright, and, of his party, Jack was certainly a dandy of the first water.

The father was of the old school; snow-white linen, sad-coloured dress, a simple strap to carry his sword, a plain steeple hat shading a thin, severe face. The son I disliked and despised; the father I disliked, and, in my present position, feared. It is the custom with us to fix round general names upon all of the opposite party, snuffling rogues, canting hypocrites, and the like, but it is idle work, and, in the end, every man must be judged by himself.

Neither Sir John Postgate's party nor principles were to my fancy, but I could not allow him to be other than an inflexibly honest and upright man. If his duty, as he conceived it, required that I should be laid by the heels, he would so lay me, but to my disfavour he would wrest nothing. I had rather ten rogues to my enemies than one such man.

True, the rogues will dig pits for you, yet the chances are many that they themselves will fall into the pits they have digged, whereas a man of single purpose follows his aim with a constancy at once dreadful and intrepid.

After a time, I shouldered a bundle of wood and made my way to the back of the house, and entered the kitchen. It was empty, and a fancy to see what was going on in the fore-part darted into my mind. I went quickly across a

second room, and slipped up the back stairs. At the head of the first flight, a narrow passage ran to the gallery overlooking the hall, and I trod quietly along it. Voices came to my ears, and I craned my neck out from the shelter of the passage. Below stood Jack Postgate smirking and smiling, and making his finest speeches to Enid. She was listening to him with an attention which I bitterly grudged him, until I comforted myself by thinking she was polite for my sake, so unreasonable and importunate is a lover.

Then Sir John and Roger came up the hall together, and the dry old Independent paused before her, and spoke and smiled, even his grim visage unbending before her fresh young beauty. Enid smiled back, and held him in gay talk, and Jack cut in again and again, and was left unregarded, at which I took great pleasure. But I dared not stay long, lest my rambling should be discovered and awaken suspicion, so returned to the kitchen and sat down to await my dinner.

In the afternoon I was again busy hacking wood, for to labour uncomplainingly at a menial task greatly helped my disguise, when I lifted my eyes and saw my love coming towards me. She stood opposite me for a good time, and regarded me carelessly, as if idly watching my busy axe while she took the air, then sauntered closer little by little. I began to carry my logs to a pile just beyond where she stood, and we conversed as I passed and repassed.

"And your interview?"

"I think it was a success. He was extremely civil. Roger had explained to him that I had come here because of the disturbed state of our neighbourhood, and I told him of the Red Men of the Dusk."

"After all, they gave you a useful story to spin."

"He listened attentively, and then told me how things stood here, yet begged me, however, to use the house as long as I pleased."

"A gracious invitation, indeed, to a lady under her own roof."

"But how was he to know that? He spoke kindly."

"On the whole, it is just as well he shouldn't know. Did he turn any questions my way?"

"He seemed to accept the story of your escape to France. At any rate he repeated it to me in explanation of the state of affairs. It was the only reference he made to you."

"Was he curious as to your connection with Butley Croft?"

"I think he saw, though he was very guarded. Roger had told him I was a ward and connection of—of Sir Arthur Vaughan."

"It is a satisfactory account," said I, "and one to which you can fairly lay claim."

Another man now came to join me at my task, and Enid sauntered slowly away. I piled my logs and reviewed the situation carefully. It seemed strong enough, as far as I could see, for us to rest here for a time at any rate.

If any danger arose it would be easy to take the road again, for I had discovered that Roger was in a position to plentifully replenish my exhausted purse. But, to what end, to march about the country, exposing Enid to the chances of rough weather and rude travel? The very fact of her being in Butley Croft was, in a sense, an element of strength in the game we were playing.

It was a natural refuge for a connection of Sir Arthur Vaughan, a son of the house.

It argued an ignorance of our doings which would avert suspicion, yet an ignorance entirely natural, when the infrequent communication was considered.

For myself, rumour had done me an excellent turn. A party of my friends, taking alarm upon the first arrests that were made, had ridden north-east to Boston, in Lincolnshire. There they had hired a fishing-lugger, and escaped, safely landing on the shores of France, and, upon all sides, my name was confidently given as one of the party. I could have wished for nothing better, and this was the story to which Enid had referred.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Interpreter.

A couple of weeks slipped uneventfully by as far as I was concerned. I played my part, though it cost me a tight rein on my every waking moment. It was so easy to make a slip, so impossible to stitch up my mask if I ever made the slightest rent in it.

Enid's eyes grew troubled as the days went by. So grieved was she at the monotonous, drudging life I led, that she wished us to take the road once more under pretence of return, and seek out some place where I could be myself again.

She had also her own annoyances to undergo. It had pleased Jack Postgate to assume the position of her sworn admirer and pester her with attentions. Jack, of course, received every snub which could be politely administered, but the thickness of his skin was such that he drew not back an inch.

One afternoon, I was sitting at table in the kitchen, where a meal had just been concluded, when Siani came in and gave me a slip of paper, accompanying it with voluble directions, of which I understood never a word. I stared vacantly at the paper as she talked away among a titter of my fellow-servants, who always took a huge delight in hearing Welsh spoken, and discovered it was a request from Roger to the landlord of the village inn for a measure of Canary wine to be sent by bearer. This sounds as if my cellars had been but indifferently stocked, yet the truth is that, short as was the time troops had been quartered on the place, it had sufficed them to drink all dry, and Roger was in no mind to show he possessed cash by restocking.

I nodded when Siani paused, put the paper in my pocket, and marched at once.

I found Adam Bell, the landlord, in his kitchen, and delivered the paper. He gave me a glass of ale, and bade me sit down for a moment, for he was busy at the time. I drank the ale readily enough, but took no notice of his invitation, till his wife called out:

"The man understands ye not, Adam. Point to the settle, he'll know what ye mean, then."

My old acquaintance conducted me to a seat in dumb show, and bustled off about his business. He had company in the parlour, and I heard Jack Postgate's voice.

"Confound the fellow," thought I, "he's for ever hanging about Butley." Then I caught his words for Adam had left the doors open.

"What, landlord, that man here! The very fellow I want to come to speech with."

This puzzled me a little. It sounded as if Adam had been talking of me, yet how Jack Postgate should speak so confidently of winning speech with me was not easy to divine. Another scrap of conversation came across the passage, and my blood leapt up and drummed furiously in my ears.

"You can get all I want out of him," cried Jack.

"Yes, indeed," replied the person to whom he spoke, "I am a Welshman born and bred." Jack was coming at me with an interpreter, and already their feet rang on the flags of the passage, blocking the door without.

My first idea was to beat a retreat. But it was hopeless, and I must face it out, for Jack Postgate and a tall man now stepped in at the only door. Upon Jack I wasted not a glance, but fixed my eyes upon his companion. The man was tall, as I have said, and powerfully built. His face was smooth and thin, and would have been handsome but for a square, bony jaw. His hair was cropped close, and he wore a plain suit of decent brown, with boots and spurs.

"Here's the man," said Postgate, rubbing his hands in high satisfaction. "Now, I want you to turn him inside out like an old glove. Find out everything you can about his mistress, as I told you. And tell him to carry this letter to her," and he shook a letter which he held between thumb and finger. Here was a pleasant string of words to

fall into a man's ears about his wife, and he utterly bound, both in tongue and hands. I became suddenly aware that I was moving uneasily and restlessly on my seat, chafing furiously at the bonds of circumstance, and that the stranger's keen, bright eyes was fixed full on me. With an effort I gulped down my wrath and assumed an impassive air.

The tall man saluted me in Welsh, and I replied, for a simple thing, such as passing the time of day, I could manage. This I did of set purpose, for to refuse to make a sound at all might raise suspicions, while to be obstinately dumb when questions upon private matters were put would bear a natural explanation.

The stranger made a short speech full of rasping gutturals. He might as well have spoken Hebrew, and I stared sullenly into the fire. He spoke again. I remained silent.

"What's the matter with the fellow?" said Jack. "He's turned dumb all of a sudden."

"Well," said the stranger, "very likely he has been told to keep his tongue quiet."

"Try him again," cried Postgate, "try him again, and warn him that, if he doesn't speak, I'll lay this lash round his shoulders," and he cracked his whip as he spoke.

While this was going on I had been groping in my consciousness to fit two things together; the stranger's voice and a name—where had I heard it before, and whose was it? He began to speak in gentle, melting tones, and my heart leapt in my side. I pulled my hat lower and looked up. The first glance taught me that the utmost caution was needed. Jack Postgate was staring gloomily at me, angered by my silence; the stranger's broad, bright eye was bent upon me with infinite meaning and warning in the look. His voice ran on, liquid and even, and he paused, then, with the utmost slowness and deliberation, he added:

"Ieuan, Ieuan Gwyllt."

The utterance of this name had no meaning for his companion, everything for me. Yet was it not needed, for I had known him upon the beginning of his third speech. Other people could play at disguises, too. Ieuan's tangle of hair was gone, the forest of beard and moustachio which formerly hid his face to the very eyes had vanished, his worn and dirty clothes were replaced by a suit of sober colour and excellent texture; he had followed my own example in almost every point of his change, and my ignorance of him showed the strength of my own disguise.

I took my cue at once and looked down into the fire, and cleared my throat.

Jack Postgate took a step forward. I did not raise my eyes, but I heard Ieuan say:

"No, no, you will spoil everything. He iss going to speak, I have just persuaded him. Keep quiet." His tones were fierce and eager, and I knew Jack's whip hung in the air.

"He'd better be quick," growled Jack, whose temper was not of a nature to parley long with anyone whom he believed he could safely beat. I spoke a sentence from my stock, and glanced at Ieuan.

I happened to know the meaning of that. It was an invitation to come into the house, sit down by the fire, and rest awhile.

Ieuan listened gravely and attentively, and gave me a nod of intelligence, which meant a great deal more than his companion could perceive.

"Well?" cried the other, impatiently.

"He says," began Ieuan, "that he was silent because he has nothing to tell you."

"What does he mean?"

Ieuan spoke to me again, and I hauled up the phrases, and fag ends of speech that had been drilled into me, and we conversed in this fantastic style for some minutes. Not a muscle of his face moved as he received my astonishing replies, but he nodded his head thoughtfully, and appeared to be enlightened.

"Now you've got hold of something," said Postgate. "What is it?"

ASTHMA

BRONCHITIS,

CHEST DISEASES,

SHORTNESS OF BREATH,

BLOOD SPITTING.

Those suffering from the above receive **POST FREE** particulars of my Special Cure, which is not of a **TRANSIENT, BUT A TRACEABLE, LASTING EFFECT,** not only combating single symptoms, but removing the causes of those diseases. Therefore a

PERMANENT CURE

is assured.

I HAVE TRIED THE TREATMENT ON MYSELF, and have practised it for 18 years on many thousands of Special Cases with the very best results, and **MANY MEDICAL MEN AND MANY CLERGYMEN** have acknowledged to me that my cure is a successful one.

Officially confirmed letters of thanks testify to surprising successes by patients who have **SUFFERED FOR 30 YEARS,** and more, though in advanced years—say 70 to 80. Many are cured after having been

GIVEN UP AS INCURABLE.

No interference with daily occupation. Send description of complaint and mention if you suffer from

COLD FEET.

PAUL WEIDHAAS, PULMONARY INSTITUTE,

16 T.A. BUCKINGHAM ROAD, BRIGHTON.

SPASMODIC ASTHMA (from Childhood) CURED.

"When I came under your treatment I was suffering from what the doctors called Spasmodic Asthma. The attacks generally came on in the night; if in the day-time I had to unfasten my clothes; my chest was very full while they lasted, and I have had a loud wheezing. My heart and nerves were left very weak. When the attacks went off, my chest felt hollow, and I had a dull pain over the heart, and my feet were nearly always cold. I often became chilly. I had the Asthma since my childhood. Now I am glad to say I have been cured by your treatment. I have no return at all of any of the symptoms, and I am very thankful for the freedom."—MRS. EVA GATLAND, Whytelcafe. (Full address on application.)

MR WEIDHAAS is prepared to pay

£1,000

to any Charitable Institution if the above are not genuine extracts from letters of patients. The originals may be seen at his Institute by any bonâ-fide inquirers.

"Well, it iss like this," said Ieuan. "I have got hold of nothing. This man was hired on the road and does not know anything in particular. The young lady started from her home with another man, an old man it wass, and he fell ill as they travelled. That was at a little pla e on the hills, about nine miles from Rhayader, a place called Bryngarw, so he says. The old man wass left there, and they told him to go back home when he wass better, and this man wass hired in his place."

Upon the simple story being narrated, with the utmost innocence of face, voice, and gesture, Jack Postgate fell to cursing, and, at that moment, Adam Bell entered with the vessel of wine.

"Here's for ye," said Adam, and handed me the vessel. The action interpreted for him, had there been need of it, and I stood up and took it, and went at once from the house. I was a good distance down the village when I hea d Ieuan shouting behind me. I looked back, and he was coming on, with a letter in his hand. I glanced round, but no one was near us.

"We must talk somewhere," said Ieuan, in a low voice. "Where? Tell me."

"When are you going on?" I asked.

"Any time; I do not care," answered he.

"Start from here," said I, "and keep straight south along the main road. Two miles on you will come to a heath, and half a mile further to a great, withered oak, standing alone. You cannot miss it. A dozen yards beyond the oak a rough heath road runs into the main. Turn up that and follow it for three miles, until you come to a deserted cottage beside the road. Wait for me there."

"I will do it," said Ieuan, and turned back at once. I looked over my shoulder as I went, and saw Jack Postgate at the door of the inn, watching us. At the same instant I became aware that Ieuan had thrust a letter and a piece of money into my hand and that I was carrying them mechanically.

Ieuan had said never a word about them, but I understood. Jack had remembered his letter to my wife, and sent it, naturally enough, by the messenger best fitted to explain to me what he wanted. Half-way up the avenue there was a bridge crossing the brook whi h runs through the park. I stood there and tore the letter into a thousand pieces and tossed them into the swift little stream.

I flung the piece of money after them, and went on, little thinking that I had now lent the chief hand to plucking my disguise from me.

BIBLIOTECA BODLEIANA

CHAPTER XXX.

Ieuan's Erand.

On reaching the house, I sought out Roger and handed over my charge. He was alone, as I had hoped, and I told him whither I was bound.

"Is he a safe man, Master Geoffrey?" whispered Roger. "Oh, be careful; it may be a plot to trepan you."

"Why, Roger, as to that," said I, "he knew who I was at the inn, and, if he had been minded to do me mischief, he had only to expose me to Postgate. I must see him, and find out what brings him about this country."

I went into the hall, and carried wood to replenish the fire. Enid was not there, and as I stood looking into the gallery, hoping she might come out of her room, a waiting-woman descended from the upper region. This woman I had detected as very watchful upon Enid and Siani, and indeed upon myself, though my supposed ignorance of the language caused me to be untroubled by inquisitive folk. She was of the Postgate faction, and without doubt was in the interest of the son, for I have never credited the father, though my enemy, with underhand work.

I went out of the house and made an opportunity to slip into the wood, which at one point ran up nearly to the garden wall, and was soon in the depths of it, making my way towards the meeting place I had fixed upon. It was still quite light when I reached it, and, after reconnoitring from an adjacent brake, I advanced upon it and found that I was first there. The road by which Ieuan would approach ran across the common, dipping into hollows, and winding through thickets and brushwood and was as grassy as the land on either side. It had been disused since the cottage was deserted but was still clearly marked by its deep ruts. I went slowly down it, keeping a sharp watch about me.

Half a mile from the cottage I saw a head against the sky, someone coming over a heathery slope before me. "Ieuan," thought I, then a second head came in sight and I dropped behind a clump of gorse and wound my way into it like a snake. It was not so much that I suspected Ieuan as that an instinctive wariness and caution had become a part of my nature.

They came on, two of them, and talking Welsh. That, of itself, was a good sign and the first glimpse I had of Ieuan's companion reassured me. Him no disguise could conceal from his acquaintances. It was the dwarf harper.

I let them pass, for I feared to offend Ieuan's touchy temper by disclosing that I had hidden from them, then rose, and ran swiftly back by a circuitous path, and was seated on a bank beside the cottage when the two red men of the dusk rode up at a foot pace.

"Well," called out Ieuan, cheerfully, "we are meeting once more," and the harper waggad his huge elf-like head at me and smiled.

"Ieuan," said I, "how did you know me?"

"Indeed, not easily from your looks," laughed he, "but many things were helping me. For one thing I had found out that Owain's sister was at the house, and then I was sure that you were not far away. When I heard that only one man wass with them I wass ready to look for you in that man. And besides I had found that you could not show yourself openly. You never said to me that you were at Nant-y-Bryn to hide yourself."

"No, Ieuan, I did not," said I.

"Never mind for that," replied Ieuan, waving his hand. "Every man must look for himself. But, you see, I was already beginning to th nk you are that man, so it wass a great help for me to find you out."

"True," said I, "it was."

"Well," continued he, "the next thing iss that you are wondering what business brings me here. What have you been thinking since you found I was in your village?"

"I have formed no opinion at all on the matter," I replied. "It was a great surprise to see you, certainly."

"Surprise," repeated Ieuan. "That iss it. It iss all surprises. I came here thinking to see you a rich man, riding the beautiful mare about this country like a king. And I found a Siac y Mynydd."*

His tone was one of keen disappointment. A sudden light broke upon me, and I laughed, and laid a hand on his arm.

"Ieuan," said I; "I see it now. You came for that hundred pounds to stock the little farm."

"Yes, indeed," confessed Ieuan. "You have put your finger on the place. And when I wass on the road I wass so easy in my mind as if it wass in my pocket."

"How much money did you get out of Nant-y-Bryn?

"Very little, very little. I took it all, for it was of no use to the others, and they carried the rest of the plunder into the hills."

"Ay, ay," said I, "and what are the people of Nant-y-Bryn doing?"

"I believe they will be very happy there," replied Ieuan. "There iss no master over the place, and no one will be paying rent. Yes, they will be satisfied."

"And the house is gone?"

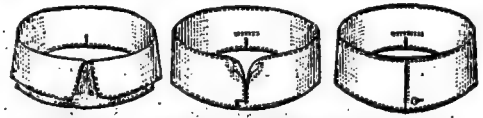
"The walls are standing," he replied; "no fire could harm them, but the rest iss ashes all."

* Jock a-mountain.

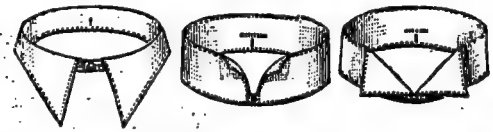
THOMPSON BROS.' GREAT GIFT

AVAILABLE UNTIL FRIDAY, JUNE 30th, ONLY.

You BUY a pair of TROUSERS at 7s. 6d., we GIVE YOU a Box of SIX COLLARS, worth 3s. 6d.
You BUY a SUIT at 27s. 6d. or 32s. 6d., and we GIVE YOU Two Boxes of COLLARS, each containing Six, worth 7s.



"BENBOW." 2¼ by 2¼. "NEW VICEROY." 2¼ by 2¼. "GARRISON." 2¼ by 2¼.



"CLYDE." "MUNSTER." 2¼ by 2. "MENTONE." 2¼ by 2.

To every purchaser of a pair of our famous 7s. 6d. TROUSERS to measure, in all the newest shades and cloths, West-end fit, cut, and style guaranteed, we will present absolutely free of further cost, a box of six of our famous West-end linen Collars (four, any shape (as above), and to every purchaser of one of our famous West-end suits at 27s. 6d. to measure, in all the new and fashionable cloths and shades, also in the new green and brown shades, now quite the season's rage, or one of our world-famed Blue and Black serge suits (guaranteed to stand sun and sea) at 32s. 6d. to measure, we will present two boxes of any of the above collars.

INSTRUCTIONS.—Country residents and those unable to call must write for patterns and self-measurement rules, sent post free to any address (the patterns need not be returned). They can then select their patterns, measure themselves, and send 7s. 6d., P.O., together with 6d. in stamps for postage, when they will receive Trousers and Collars as required. If Suit is required, send 27s. 6d. or 32s. 6d., together with 1s. extra for postage. State size of neck and shape required. This offer is absolutely bona fide. Those able to call and be measured will, of course, receive the same advantages.

S. T. THOMPSON BROS., Tailors, Ltd., 3 OXFORD STREET, LONDON, W. (Corner Charing Cross Road).

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IT'S MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS.

A 6d. BOTTLE makes
8 GALLONS
PRIME NON-INTOXICATING BEER
WHOLESOME.
PREPARED from ENGLISH HERBS
Sample Bottle Free 9 Stamps, 2 for 15 Stamps.

NEWBALL & MASON, NOTTINGHAM.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

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"The walls are standing, eh?" I repeated; "then, Ieuan, you have been turning your back on your hundred pounds all the time."

"What!" he cried. "You know of some money hidden there?"

"I do," said I, and told him of the sum which I had unquilted from my coat and given over to the keeping of Sir Arthur.

"And why did you not ask for it back when you went away?" said Ieuan.

"I had plenty for my immediate needs," I replied, "and I was not on terms to have civil dealings with Sir Arthur."

Ieuan nodded and beat his fist lightly upon his knee.

"However," I continued, "we must see what can be done still."

"Do you mean that you can help me?" he asked quickly, "you, who look so poor."

"I who look so poor," I laughed. "I think I can do something yet. Mind, I do not promise for all. But I will get you a good share of it."

"You are making me very thankful," burst out Ieuan, "now I will tell you everything. I am very anxious, very anxious to get some money, for I have been feeling so sure of having it with you that I have been talking to Winny."

"I see, and she is going with you to the little farm, which was not a fancy after all, Ieuan."

"No," said, he, looking at me very slily, "but everybody is not telling everything."

"A fair hit," said I, "and where is this farm?"

"It is in the South," replied Ieuan; "I heard of it from a man I know very well when I was travelling that way about three months ago."

"And what will become of the Red Men of the Dusk without their leader?"

"I do not know, and, indeed, I do not care. I have done with them now. Dafydd, here, has begged so hard to come with me that I have said yes, and so he followed me here."

"Then you and Winny will get married?"

"Yes, yes," said Ieuan in a tone of exultation. "That is right."

"And the little boy?" I ventured.

"Winny's mother is very anxious to keep him, and he will be all right with her."

"That prisoner," I shot off at a tangent. "That fellow we tripped up on the ice, Ieuan, what of him?"

"I let him go, myself," replied Ieuan. "Yes, Gruffydd is in his own home to-day."

"I am glad of it," said I.

"You are wondering, perhaps, how I came to be talking to that man this afternoon," said Ieuan, "but it was just an accident. We came to that inn about mid-day, and after dinner I was in the yard talking to Dafydd when he came in. He stopped and listened and asked me what language we were speaking. When I told him, he begged me to come to the parlour to drink some wine with him. While we were doing that in you came, and then he brought me out, and of course I was anxious to see you, to find out what I could for myself."

I nodded and sat in thought for a few moments.

"Have you any food?" I asked.

"Plenty," said Ieuan. "We bought some at the inn, thinking we might want it to-night, and it nearly finished the money I had left."

"You must have spent a good deal on your clothes," I remarked. "You are both so fine that it's hard work to make you out."

Ieuan smiled a quiet, dry smile, and waved his hand carelessly. "Oh, we had them on the road," he said. The suspicion which had prompted my remark was confirmed, and I knew now that some unfortunate travellers had been turned adrift in their dirty and tattered garments, victims of an unprofitable exchange.

"Can you camp here till to-morrow morning?" I asked.

"That will be easy," replied Ieuan.

"Very well," I returned. "I will be here at daybreak with what money I can bring you."

And, upon this understanding, we parted. When I got back to the house I tossed a pinch of gravel against the lighted window of the room where Roger generally sat of an evening. He understood the signal and met me, five minutes afterwards in a sheltered nook at one corner, of the bowling green. When he heard my story he strongly urged me to give Ieuan his hundred pounds in full. Roger had now a considerable amount of money in his hands of which he had taken care that Sir John Postgate knew nothing. He had drawn in secretly several large sums immediately after my flight, seeing that evil times were close at hand.

"Give him his money, Master Geoffrey," said Roger. "Suppose he informed on you! What is his character?"

"Why, Roger," said I, "he is savage and vindictive, and a thief to his finger-tips. If he owed me a grudge he would handle my blood money with positive delight. But then 'tis his creed and his gospel. He was brought up to respect such ideas. These things apart, he is an excellent fellow, and, I am certain, is not bent at present on doing me harm."

"Take him his hundred pounds by dawn of day," said Roger, "every penny of it."

"I had thought of giving him the half," I replied. "It is not that I grudge him the money, but I cannot help looking ahead, Roger. Suppose I have to fly from here, again. Suppose Butley Croft could no longer afford a refuge to my wife, then that money would be needed for her use. And I scarcely feel inclined to give away a penny which might prove of service to her."

"Never fear for that," whispered Thorne, eagerly. "Leave me to handle that turn of affairs, Master Geoffrey, should it ever come. Besides the money in the house, there are several large amounts out in the hands of safe men of our own party; men who would never blab a word, ye render account to you or to me to the last penny. We can spare this hundred pounds to clear this man out of the country, easily, easily I say."

"He'll be off swiftly enough when he gets it," I returned, "for fear anyone should forestall him at Nant-y-Bryn. Coin or bullion, he'll touch another hundred there."

The upshot was that I slipped out of the house before peep of day the next morning with a small, heavy leathern bag, containing Ieuan's hundred pounds in gold. I received a score of compliments for every coin, and now Ieuan told me where he was to settle. It was on the border of Monmouthshire, and he intended to devote himself to the rearing of cattle and mountain ponies, a pursuit which he thoroughly understood.

(To be continued.)

On the completion of this serial in a few weeks we shall begin Mr. George Griffith's famous story

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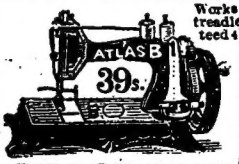

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NOTES OF INTEREST.

W. H. W.—The word costermonger is supposed to be derived from costard, an apple round and bulky, which was usually sold by the cla s of persons named herewith.

BAROMETERS.—A French meteorological journal gives a list of plants which, by their behaviour under different atmospheric conditions, enable weather prognostications to be made. For instance, rain may be expected when the stalks of clover and other similar plants stand upright. The closing of the convulvulus, the pimpernel, the sorrel, and the bindweed, indicates rain also; while the opening of the sorrel, the African marigold, indicates fine weather.

P.—Try the following method of making luminous paper: Make a mixture of forty parts pulp, ten parts phosphorescent powder, one part of gelatine, one part of potassium bichromate, and ten parts of water. This is waterproof, and may be used when the common paint is not applicable.

TROUBLED (Winchester).—Eau de Cologne is a capital remedy for toothache. Place a few drops of this well-known scent on cotton-wool, and place in the tooth, or rub the gums and the portion of the face outside the painful tooth with eau de Cologne.

TRAP.—The flamingoes which fish in a lake near Mount Ascotan, in the Andes, do not appear to profit by the misfortunes of their ancestors. This sheet of water is fed by a hot spring, which raises the temperature of the lake in the immediate neighbourhood of its inflow. But the rest of this Alpine tarn is frozen every night. Accordingly, the natives, knowing that if the birds fish in the colder places they will be frozen fast by their legs, visit it every morning to seize the imprisoned flamingoes before the hot sun thaws them out.

WINDOW.—When the Palace of Trianon was building for Louis XIV. at the end of Versailles Park, that monarch went to inspect it, accompanied by Louvois, secretary of war, and superintendent of the building. Whilst walking arm-in-arm with him, he remarked that one of the windows was out of shape and smaller than the rest. This Louvois denied, and asserted that he could not perceive the least difference. Louis XIV. having had it measured, and finding that he had judged rightly, treated Louvois in a contumelious manner before his whole court. This conduct so incensed the minister that when he arrived home he set to work to bring about a war, and succeeded.

CURIOUS.—It is a mistake to suppose that the English are singular in eating cross buns. The Swedes have their Lenten buns, very much like ours in shape and size, but somewhat lighter. They are eaten first on Shrove Tuesday, and afterwards during Lent. They are usually served at dinner, instead of pancakes, in a plate of boiled milk, with sugar and cinnamon strewed over them. The inside of the bun is stuffed with a paste made of sugar, almonds, butter, and cream, but without ginger.

H. Q.—From time immemorial the rose has been regarded as an emblem of silence, having been dedicated by Cupid to Harpocrates, the god of Silence. Presenting or holding a rose to a person was regarded as a signal to hold his tongue, and in rooms it was usual to place a rose above the table to signify that what was there spoken should be kept a secret.

EYE.—There are several well-authenticated instances of such abnormal vision. Here is one. A German tailor who died at Breslau in 1837 had such keen sight that he was able to see two of Jupiter's four moons with the naked eye.

K. B.—Two instances are recorded in which bees have been used as weapons of defence in war. When the Roman General Lucullus was warring against Mithridates, and sent a force against the city of Themiscyra, the besieged threw down on the invaders myriads of swarms of bees. These at once began an attack which resulted in the raising of the siege. The insects were also once used with equal success in England. Chester was besieged by Danes and Norwegian, but its Saxon defenders threw down on them the beehives of the town and the siege was soon raised.

H.—The Empress Josephine was the first to publicly use a pocket handkerchief. Her teeth were bad, and she gracefully concealed this defect by holding a costly handkerchief before her lips. The ladies of the Court followed her example, and the custom was thus inaugurated as a fashion.

HONEY.—The following curious use of honey shows its power of preserving organic substances from natural decay. The Khasias, a semi-civilised mountain tribe of Northern India, always dispose of their dead by cremation. As this process, however, can only be efficiently carried out in the dry season, their furnaces being constructed in the open air, they preserve the bodies of those who die during the rains in rudely-shaped troughs filled with honey.

GOLD.—As affording some idea of the amount of light gold now in circulation, it is stated that recently a financier in the City accepted £1,000 largely made up of half-sovereigns, and that, on the amount being weighed at his banker's, it was found to be short by £19.

WREN.—They hunt the wren in Ireland on St. Stephen's Day. Jenny seems to be hunted in a good many countries, and for a different reason in each. Our Irish friends regard her as the foe of freedom, and treat her accordingly. They say that, early in the history of Ireland, a body of Danes invaded the country. The invaders on one occasion ate and drank too freely, and the natives resolved to attack them. Before they could do this, however, a number of hungry wrens alighted on the drum-heads, which were strewn with the remains of the feast, the Danes having used them as tables, and made such a noise that the sleeping foreigners were roused.

MARBLE.—The little town of Carrara, near the famous quarries of that name, is literally built of white statuary marble. The very paving stones are composed of this material, when they are used; and where they are not, the roadway is made up and covered over with marble chips, which, in that district, serve the purposes to which the broken granite is applied here. The contrast between the squalid poverty of the furniture of the interior of the meanest dwellings in Carrara and the marble door-pillars, window-frames, flooring and mantel-slabs is very striking.

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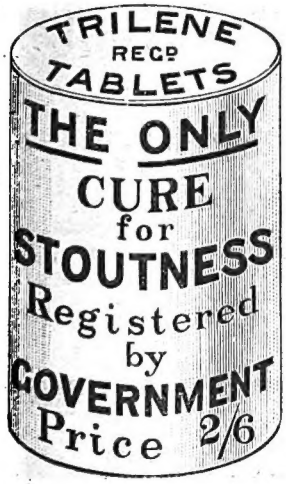

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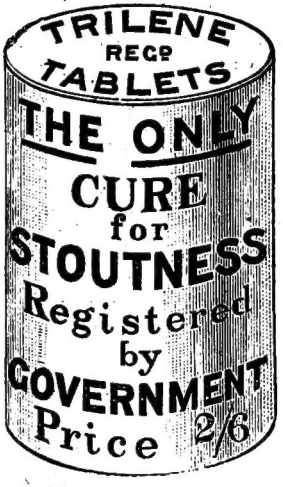

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"67 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.

"Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

MRS. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

MISS CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 8lb., but am now 11st. and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 2lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me. "Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

MRS. D. BURTON, of Silvertleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

MISS NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Riseholme Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

MR. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

FATHER T. M. BYRNE, of Holy Cross Abbey, Sligo, writes: "When I began your Tablets I was 12st. 5lb.; I now scale at 10st. 11lb.—my case, too, is hereditary

MRS. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigston, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 9st. 11lb."

Mr. MCLEOD, 44, Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT, of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Mrs. WHITEHOUSE, of Poplar Avenue, Edgbaston, writes: "My husband is in splendid health, and has lost 15lb. in weight since taking the Tablets; I am sure I thank you on his account."

MRS. H. COX, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

MR. WALKER, 230 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mr. BUTLER, Surgeon, M.R.C.V.S., of Hampton Manor, Evesham, says: "My patient has lost 1st. in weight whilst taking your Tablets."

MRS E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 2 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. RADFORD, of High Street, New Brinsley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 40 inches round waist, now I am 32 inches. I hope soon to be 23. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

Countess G. FURSTENBERG, of Stammheim, Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

MRS. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver, nr, Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

Miss A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

Miss A. DAWSON, 92 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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